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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Improved effectiveness of early-warning systems with regard to natural and similar disasters

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

This report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/117 B of 20 December 1995, evaluates the applicability of early-warning concepts for improving preparedness and minimizing risks from natural and similar disasters that have an adverse effect on the environment. It elaborates upon issues first identified in the report of the Secretary-General on early-warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters presented to the fiftieth session of the Assembly (A/50/526) in response to Assembly resolution 49/22 B of 20 December 1994.

Five international expert groups on early warning, convened by the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in the context of the International Framework for Action, examined scientific knowledge and public practices that could contribute to more accurate and timely short-term forecasting and warning applications for natural and similar disasters. Consideration is given to early-warning measures as they apply to various types of hazards, the use of technology and the importance of local community involvement in determining the efficacy of early-warnings, particularly in developing countries and those with special circumstances that increase their vulnerability to disasters.

The report identifies established and developing capabilities for early warning, and recommends increased local utilization of warnings and related aspects of disaster management in order to minimize the risks of disasters. The recommendations provide a basis for a concrete proposal for an effective international mechanism on early warning under the auspices of the United Nations and as part of the implementation of the IDNDR Framework and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, which will be submitted by the IDNDR secretariat (see A/52/560).

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I. EARLY WARNING FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A. Early warning in a changing world

1. Providing early and effective warning of the possible risk of natural or other disasters is widely recognized as crucial to saving lives and protecting property from damage. It is also a key component of effective disaster management.

2. The increased vulnerability of many communities suggests that local practices and the socio-economic conditions threatened by natural hazards need to be studied so that warnings may contribute to the reduction of risks. While natural disasters affect all countries, they have a disproportionately greater impact on developing countries, including countries with emerging economies, those with economies in transition and those with special circumstances, such as small island developing States and land-locked countries.

3. In recent months, there has been evidence of successful warning practices. In Bangladesh earlier this year, more than 500,000 people were evacuated from areas exposed to the most severe effects of a tropical cyclone. This was accomplished through the timely collaboration of scientists, public authorities, local administrators and the full understanding of communities prone to natural disasters. In contrast, floods of unexpected force overwhelmed existing warning or protective measures in countries of North and South America, Central and Western Europe earlier this year.

4. Public authorities can benefit from a better understanding of the importance of early-warnings. The necessity of wise management of the environmental conditions on which societies depend is increasingly apparent as early-warning systems take full account of the relationships among natural hazards, social vulnerability and environmental conditions in local communities.

5. The first report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/50/526) elaborated upon initiatives and established programmes promoted by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in association with Member States. Present challenges require a more comprehensive approach, and one that takes greater account of private initiatives. New forms of information exchange, commercial interests, and more relevant global experience related to disaster reduction will contribute to improved early-warning practices. Future investments in early-warning systems are required and will be of great benefit in countries most seriously affected by natural and similar disasters.

6. Future advances in early warning will require additional commitments from Member States. Progress in this domain will also open new opportunities for both local community initiatives and commercial involvement. Early warning needs to be reoriented away from largely technical concepts pursued within single sectoral areas of interest. Emphasis must, therefore, be placed on improving the understanding of local needs and on involving those who are most directly affected by natural and related hazards.

B. The international process for improved early warning

7. In 1991, the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction declared early-warning for disaster reduction as one of the Decade's three programme targets. To meet this objective, this Advisory Committee of the Secretary-General has encouraged all countries to ensure ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems as part of their national development plans by the year 2000.

8. Two additional programme targets were established by the Committee in 1991, namely, the integration of comprehensive national risk assessment with national development plans, and the application of practical mitigation measures that address long-term disaster prevention, preparedness and community awareness at national and local levels. In doing so, essential linkages have been established for institutionalizing effective warnings within national development policies.

9. The critical nature of early-warning in protecting vital resources and in addressing national development objectives was further highlighted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama, Japan, in May 1994 (see the report of the Conference, A/CONF.172/9, chap. V). The Conference stressed that, for early-warning to be successful, a commitment in public policy decisions was required. In this respect, pertinent scientific knowledge and a public awareness of early-warning capabilities were recognized as being essential for viable political initiatives. Specific proposed activities were outlined in the primary outcome of the Conference, the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation containing the Principles, the Strategy and Plan of Action (ibid., chap. I, resolution 1, annex I).

10. The Assembly, in its resolution 50/117 B, requested the Scientific and Technical Committee to undertake a study of ways to improve the effectiveness of early-warning for natural and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment. The IDNDR secretariat has continued to work through an inter-agency and multi-disciplinary approach previously used in the development of the International Framework for Action (Assembly resolution 44/236, annex). The secretariat convened five international expert working groups to study aspects of early-warning as they relate to geological hazards, hydrometeorlogical hazards including drought, technological hazards, the use and transfer of modern technology, and national and local capabilities pertinent to early-warning.

11. The conclusions of the expert working groups reflect global experience and form the basis of the present report. Detailed information reports from each working group are available from the IDNDR secretariat. Additional information about early-warning related to wildfire, as well as guiding principles for the effective implementation of national early-warning systems, are also available.

12. The findings of the IDNDR expert groups, the present views conveyed by this report, and those expressed by Member States will become substantive inputs for an international conference on early-warning systems for the reduction of natural disasters, to be held in Potsdam (Germany) in September 1998. This

technical and scientific conference is being sponsored by the Government of Germany with the collaboration of United Nations agencies and international scientific organizations. As a milestone event of the IDNDR Framework for Action, the conference will identify accomplishments and summarize the experience gained in early-warning during the Decade. It will contribute to discussions regarding the most suitable United Nations mechanisms to improve early-warning for natural disasters for the next century.

II. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF EARLY WARNING

A. Early warning and the variable nature of hazards

13. Successful early-warning depends on translating technical and scientific knowledge into an understandable message that informs a political decision-making process. The existence of operational capacity which can respond to the political call to action is also required. It is vital to concentrate on measures that transfer the warning process closer to locations where people are most vulnerable. At the national level, the crucial starting point must be the political recognition of the need to identify those populations that are most at risk. A second pre-requisite for effective warning is both the understanding by a vulnerable population of the hazards to which it may be exposed and an appreciation of the natural forces that can destroy elements of their economic livelihood and social well-being.

14. The magnitude and scope of hazards can affect the anticipated effectiveness of early-warning practices. The time scale and long-term implications of effects have a distinct bearing on the suitability of forecasting practices as they relate to specific hazards. In addition, an appreciation is required of the linkages between natural events and resulting technological hazards, and conversely, of the impact of human activities on the frequency or severity of the effects of natural hazards.

15. Newly emerging phenomena, such as the possibility of long-term climate change with the expectation of disastrous effects on a global scale or, better known, periodic seasonal or geographical anomalies such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation phenomenon, create further uncertainties and new challenges for institutionalized warning practices.

16. Ultimately, early-warning systems must address the individual hazards that affect people where they live. This needs to be emphasized as hazard patterns change with an increasing frequency of small-scale and physically dispersed hazards influenced by human behaviour and environmental practices that, nonetheless, have significant local impact with cumulative consequences.

B. Early warning for hydrometeorological hazards

17. Hydrometeorological hazards include a wide variety of meteorological, hydrological and climatic phenomena that can pose a threat to life, property or the environment. Warnings are presently issued by one or more national meteorological and hydrological services for over 30 different types of natural

phenomena. As components of global weather, hydrometeorlogical hazards are the most frequent widespread and extensively observed natural hazards.

18. Weather conditions are intimately associated with economic endeavours and social well-being. The violence of extreme anomalous climatic conditions and the destruction caused by single events underlie the importance that must be attached to these conditions. Fortunately, despite their variations in temporal and spatial scales, hydrometeorlogical hazards can be continuously monitored, analysed, predicted and reported upon by a well-established global scientific and technical infrastructure.

19. The national meteorological services in most states and territories are engaged in the daily work of comprehensive data collection, analysis and operational weather forecasting. These national services, working collaboratively in real time, provide the unique operational capabilities of the World Weather Watch of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), a coordinated international system of national meteorological and hydrological services that is based on the common acceptance of protocols and standard terminology. It comprises three components: the Global Observing System, which includes a constellation of geostationary and polar orbiting satellites and provides data needed for hazard identification and analysis; the Global Data Processing System, which produces weather analysis, forecasts, and other forms of guidance largely based on numerical model output; and the Global Telecommunication System, which links all the countries of the world and relays observations, forecast guidance and other advisory and information products.

20. This basic institutional infrastructure, in place for more than 30 years, also supports other comprehensive international programmes dedicated to specific hazards and overarching climatic concerns. These include other specific programmes supported by WMO in association with Member States like the World Climate Programme, the Tropical Cyclone Programme, and the Hydrology and Water Resources Programme.

21. Owing to the demonstrated effectiveness of this international system of national capabilities, components of the World Weather Watch have been employed to perform additional early-warning functions associated with other hazards. For example, the Global Telecommunication System has been used to communicate information and warning guidance about volcanic ash clouds in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and to disseminate tsunami warnings in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It also cooperates with the International Atomic Energy Agency in the global communication of information regarding nuclear accidents.

22. As early-warning requirements are considered for the next century, the effects of weather and climate on other hazards need to be increasingly taken into account. The effect of weather conditions on wildfire is well known, and research increasingly provides additional insight into the consequences of fire, smoke and ash on long-term weather patterns. More is now known regarding how natural, chemical or nuclear pollutants are dispersed through air, land and water, often by means of hydrological, meteorological or climatic forces.

23. Drought presents a special challenge for effective early warning owing to its complex and protracted development. Consistent monitoring of vulnerability to drought is required because of its widespread and often devastating effects that strike at the most basic human needs of food, water, shelter and security through incremental deprivation. Effective drought management, as opposed to drought relief, is dependent upon the early identification of risk indicators.

24. The various factors that contribute to drought necessarily involve the coordination of professional disciplines that cut across traditional areas of sectoral responsibility and the mandates of different organizations. Multi-disciplinary monitoring and forecasting programmes currently exist for drought, such as the Global Information and Early-warning System on Food and Agriculture. These existing arrangements demonstrate the feasibility of international and regional agreements to practical institutional arrangements, which could have wider application for the sustained monitoring of continuing natural hazard risks.

25. The integrated global system that has been established for the monitoring and warning of hydrometeorlogical hazards through the coordinated activities of national services is dependent on the free and unrestricted exchange of data and the communication of information. Commercial endeavours or political processes that restrict access to freely available information would be detrimental to the existence of effective warning functions. The commercialization of hydrometeorlogical data or any political restrictions that could limit the availability of information essential to warning systems within individual countries or internationally can only reinforce inequalities based on wealth or political advantage. This would, in turn, increase vulnerability in those very countries of special circumstances where the need for improvement is greatest.

26. Improvements in the accuracy and timeliness of early warning for hydrometeorlogical hazards now rest predominantly on the ability to extend existing practices, material resources and professional capabilities to areas of lesser coverage, concentration or quality in some developing countries. This will involve upgrading observational networks and telecommunication systems in developing countries and among other countries with special considerations.

27. Despite widespread and rapidly evolving means of international transmission, the communication of early warning is still problematic for many of the world's people. Basic telecommunication services remain inadequate in some countries, while in others disaster-resistant forms of communication are required.

28. In cases where improvement in hydrometeorlogical early-warning is required, wider public awareness and education of vulnerable populations assumes critical importance. In order to take account of the full impact of human actions and the growth inherent in communities over time, particular attention is needed to ensure the continuous development of local capabilities embedded in the on-going activities and daily practices within local communities.

C. Early warning related to geological hazards

29. In contrast to many hydrometeorlogical hazards that develop over a matter of hours or days, geological hazards characteristically produce sudden, dramatic and devastating events. They are driven by powerful forces built up over much longer time periods largely beyond the daily sensibilities of the general population. Equally, the complex events that suddenly disclose the apparent geological hazards are often not yet fully understood by even the most sophisticated scientific analysis.

30. Unlike hydrometeorlogical hazards, the probable physical location of most geological hazards, with the exception of tsunamis, are fixed and largely confined to areas that can be broadly identified in advance. Potential risks can be localized in broad terms by parameters of plate tectonics and other aspects of earth science, or in relation to locally distinctive physical characteristics of an area. In many cases, the primary land effects of volcanoes and landslides can be estimated within fixed and identifiable proximities.

31. The most distinguishing factor of geological hazards is that in many cases they strike with little or no advance warning. Much has been learned in recent years about the geological forces that immediately precede some volcanic eruptions, and in optimal conditions some hours notice can be communicated about a potential tsunami occurring over a wide geographical area. Nevertheless, the extreme complexity of the forces that create geological hazards severely limits precise estimates of their physical location or specific times of occurrence. An uncertainty about specific geological events undermines the reliability of any warning. This lack of knowledge that could be translated into practical measures to avoid geological hazards prevents most opportunities for conventional early warning actions.

32. It becomes increasingly important to understand the nature of the effects of geological hazards that can be understood scientifically, so that preliminary protective measures can be taken in areas of known risk. The dissemination of these mitigation practices and the wide public understanding of their value are necessary to fully benefit from early warning.

33. It is important to distinguish the relative feasibility of early warning as it applies in geological terms. A warning is usually a recommendation or instruction for preventive or protective action, such as the evacuation of an area. In contrast, a prediction is a statement that a geological hazard of a specified nature will occur with a given probability during a certain time in a prescribed geographic area. A scientific prediction provides the basis for a warning, issued by government officials.

34. Short-term earthquake prediction depends on the existence, detection, and recognition of anomalous phenomena that are preparatory to the sudden onset of an event. The most comprehensive analysis of potential earthquake precursors has been conducted by the Subcommission on Earthquake Prediction of the International Association for Physics and the Earth's Interior (IASPEI) in 1991 and more recently in 1997.[1] In considering a list of the known possible anomalies and precursors to earthquakes, the IASPEI Subcommission concluded that

there was not a single method of prediction that could be said to be accepted universally and by which earthquakes could be reliably predicted.

35. Regardless of whether short-term earthquake prediction is impossible or, more optimistically, unresolved due to lack of observations, few scientists would claim that it is a proven capability. Most importantly, it must be considered that at the present time there is no short-term earthquake prediction capability with any degree of consistency or reliability. The processes that give rise to earthquake hazards are complex in nature, and there are inherent difficulties that make reliable short-term earthquake prediction a difficult research challenge.

36. While precursors of other geological hazards may permit more opportunity for short-term prediction, the possibilities must be qualified. The Tsunami Warning System operated by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is a well-established and respected warning system that immediately disseminates tsunami warnings throughout the Pacific Basin after the detection of a precursor event.

37. Unlike the field of earthquake prediction, where only a relatively small number of precursors have been observed, volcanology benefits from ample eruption precursors. Yet some potential precursors are so ambiguous that only a vague alert can be sounded, and still others do not culminate in an eruption at all. The largest problem for volcanic prediction is insufficient frequency, spatial concentration, and parameters of observation to distinguish one interpretation from another. Even recent advances in the scientific understanding of these complex events leave much to speculation or, at best, any systematic patterns observed may be highly opportunistic to specific events or individual examples.

38. Given the difficulties of predicting in most instances the occurrence of geological hazards, it is important to understand the effects of these hazards in a specific location in advance. The issuance of advisory instructions should be based upon knowledge of possible consequences of geological hazards. A prediction of possible effects is necessary for developing appropriate preventive measures and for the establishment of response plans.

39. The concept of plate tectonics provides a framework for interpreting the significance of information as it applies to the potential occurrence of geological hazards. Therefore, there is an adequate basis for undertaking further studies and measures in specific locations to avert potential losses. The use of high-resolution, localized information is important for the monitoring of changes that can increase the vulnerability of local communities to the effects and intensity of geological hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, subsidence, or ground collapse.

40. Other means of immediate action as a result of real-time warnings can be employed to prevent the worst effects of geological hazards. High-speed computation and communications systems are able to predict effects as a geological hazard is taking place, and to communicate information about the hazard to locations at risk before the effect has occurred. The potential effects of tsunamis can be notified to communities at risk, and aviation can be

warned of hazards posed by the atmospheric dispersal of invisible volcanic ash clouds. In Japan and in the United States of America, the rapid detection and communication of specific earthquake effects have shut down transportation systems and hazardous industrial processes. It must be noted that these sophisticated technological possibilities demand technical and material resources not readily available in many disaster-prone countries.

41. Numerous scientific bodies and institutions are dedicated to the active study and reporting on geological hazards internationally. However, unlike the international infrastructure that has been developed on the basis of distributed technical abilities and national agencies concerned with hydrometeorology, no comparable institutionalized capability exists at present to address early warning issues and related global concerns for geological hazards. Opportunities should be explored to address early warning of global hazards and disaster events on a more comprehensive basis in which operational synergies could be realized and inter-disciplinary benefits obtained. In this connection, it may be appropriate to reassess, through the United Nations system, the perceived needs and the possible benefits of linking currently fragmented responsibilities related to geological hazards. This could provide increased access to consolidated information and enable the dissemination of more consistent knowledge related to early warning.

D. Early warning for technological hazards and environmental conditions

42. An important outcome of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was the recognition of the close linkages between disaster losses and environmental degradation, as emphasized in Agenda 21.[2] More specifically, the Conference reaffirmed Principle 18 of the Rio Declaration,[3] which stressed the need for the international community to assist States afflicted by natural disasters and other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects to the environment.

43. With these commitments, technological hazards resulting from the spread of economic growth and industrial development have become an additional risk to societies and the environments on which they depend. As the density of industrial activity increases and the probability of incidents rises, the detection and early warning of risks to the environment must become a major responsibility in the improved coordination of early warning practices worldwide. In addition, thought must be given to possible hazards associated with new forms of production. These include activities associated with genetic technology, and the prevalence of other types of biological contamination.

44. Hazardous waste disposal may pose a threat to communities and, in many cases, the risk grows as the identification of socially and economically acceptable solutions becomes more difficult. This is particularly problematic for countries undergoing economic transition and where industrial processes are being upgraded. As many of these risks develop incrementally, and may only emerge after some time, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on monitoring capabilities and the complete life-cycle assessment for products and the manufacturing, use and disposal processes concerned.

45. Adequate safeguards in the use or disposal of hazardous materials are an additional economic burden, particularly for economically disadvantaged societies. Economic inducements encourage the transfer of hazardous materials from sophisticated societies to poorer, less-industrialized countries where adequate warning and protective measures are costly or are not yet fully developed. The disposal of some hazardous material must be rendered safe and monitored for all time. In these cases, early warning capacities must be perpetual.

46. Environment damage can be caused through oversight, insufficient enforcement of controls or standards, or the excessive demands of industrialization impacting upon the provision of basic needs, particularly in urban environments. As hazards themselves result from human behaviour, local knowledge and forewarning can be employed to form the basis of an early warning system. National legislation, technical methods and institutional procedures often exist within countries to address localized events. However, in the context of atmospheric or water-borne contamination, which can lead easily to transboundary effects, there are fewer systematic procedures for early warning of technological hazards. At present, the prevalence of technological hazards and their increased risk to humankind and the environment are insufficiently integrated into existing early warning mechanisms.

47. There are presently at least 20 different United Nations departments, programmes or agencies involved in some manner with technological hazards in an international context. The question must be asked to what extent they are coordinated, compatible and complementary? Most importantly, greater definition is necessary to specify primary responsibilities for defining and implementing global responsibilities for early warning related to technological hazards and environmental risks.

48. Experience has shown that much can be achieved through a coordinated approach. Spurred on by international concern immediately following the Chernobyl disaster, the international Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency[4] provide useful examples of cross-sectoral and transboundary issues being addressed effectively. The coordination provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the direction that has resulted in establishing common nomenclature, standard protocols, and agreed reporting procedures have enabled different agencies of the United Nations system to complement each other in operational terms for warning and response activities related to nuclear accidents.

49. Regional initiatives have also seen States that share a risk within a geographical area combine their interests. The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents of the Economic Commission for Europe provides for measures regarding the prevention, preparedness and response to industrial accidents capable of causing transboundary effects. Twenty-one States have also acceded to the Open Partial Agreement of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement with the main aim of closer cooperation in a multi-disciplinary context to ensure better prevention, protection and organization of relief in the event of major natural or technological disasters.

50. There is currently a need for international agreement on designating an authority that would harmonize the many interests involved, and develop global standards for warning and effective response of technological disasters. A joint United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat Environment Unit was established in the Department in 1994 to enhance and coordinate international response to environmental disasters. More needs to be done to consolidate information about the risks posed by technological hazards and to develop synergies between early warning functions and to integrate them into appropriate prevention strategies.

51. The interplay between the effect of hazards and the achievements of national development, and the extent to which one is able to influence the other, is mirrored in the relationship between technical accomplishment and the maintenance of environmental viability. A similar need for balance and wise management exists in the more widely developed understanding and commitment to careful monitoring of the effects of natural forces on the environment.

52. Wildfire, which is essential for maintaining natural dynamic equilibrium, productivity and the carrying capacity of many ecosystems, can easily destroy important social and economic assets if left uncontrolled. Significantly, absolute prevention policies were pursued for years, until it was recognized that wildfire could never be completely controlled because of practical and financial limitations. Subsequently, the importance of managing wildfire hazards became the dominant policy promoted through the collaborating interests of public authorities, commercial interests and local commitments driven by a combination of balanced economic, social and ecological values.

53. Early detection and warning practices are critical to making decisions necessary for appropriate fire management responses and to maintain balanced natural and human-influenced fire regimes. As wildfire produces conditions to create other potential hazards, such as atmospheric pollution, or increased erosion and siltation, which can lead to flooding, fire management practices constitute an important element related to environmental hazards.

54. Other environmental issues need to be considered when addressing wider early warning concerns. The consequences of weather conditions can either increase or reduce the possibility of severe insect infestation of food supplies on which millions of people depend. Severe erosion, which reduces agricultural production as in parts of Africa or which threatens the existence of cities as in Bangladesh equally demands attention for maintaining early warning systems as an essential part of development programmes.

55. There is a current need to provide more comprehensive attention to the early warning of technological and environmental hazards. Specialized knowledge and various organizational mandates have created gaps or unclear delineations of responsibility in current institutional abilities to address adequately early warning for technological hazards and issues of severe environmental degradation. An existing United Nations authority should be designated to organize global efforts to consolidate information, to sustain focused attention and to coordinate distributed implementation responsibilities.

III. TECHNOLOGY DEPENDS ON PEOPLE

A. Technological opportunities for improved early warning

56. The rapid development of new technology and increased opportunities for its availability in many parts of the world have had a significant effect on improving early warning effectiveness in recent years. Technologies associated with space-based and terrestrial remote sensing, geographic information systems, satellite observation and communications, mathematical modelling of event scenarios, and the entire field of global communications have revolutionized the ability to monitor, analyze and disseminate accurate and timely information about natural hazards.

57. Access to new technology among developing countries has frequently been difficult for technical and economic reasons. Insufficient training in the use of available technologies has hampered their rapid integration into common practice. Capital costs and the recurrent expenditure for maintenance or supporting equipment have also been limiting factors.

58. With respect to other technologies, there are indications that earlier barriers are being diminished as costs are reduced and applications become better understood. As attention is given to developing new technologies relevant for improved early warning, emphasis must equally be given to its practical applications. Sophisticated knowledge or complex procedures need to be translated into useful idioms if they are to provide a benefit to the people most directly affected.

59. Remote sensing technology has proven to be of great use in observing and monitoring the spatial distribution of hazard-related data. The availability and widespread use of remote sensing data have increased enormously as more has become available at continuously reduced cost. Geographic information systems that are able to combine a variety of space and land-based data enable scenarios to be analyzed that would have been impossible only a few years ago.

60. Meteorological satellites now monitor the earth's atmosphere, oceans and land surface almost in real time. If all currently planned commercial and governmental satellites are launched, by the year 2000 numerous satellites will be providing continuous global data. A need will develop, then, to ensure that the wealth of technical data is translated into useful information so that it may be most effectively utilized. It must also be commonly and freely accessible to national early warning systems.

61. Similarly, the benefits of interactive, global telecommunication systems are rapidly becoming evident as commercial interests engage in intense competition to serve predominantly urban areas of countries with well-developed economies. Although the intended area of coverage for some of these systems is global, in practical terms the services are not yet readily available in remote areas or in many developing countries. Commercial system developers are expressing the expectation that, within the next five years, dozens of satellites will provide comprehensive and affordable early warning communication accessible anywhere in the world. The commercial interests propelling these

developments have already demonstrated capabilities that can revolutionize local access to hazard and disaster management information.

62. These imminent developments in telecommunications are encouraging for improved international, as well as local, access to early warning. Global economic trends also suggest that the dissemination function of technical data, public information and authoritative warnings will increasingly rely on commercial enterprises. When coupled with the already demonstrated growth and effectiveness of other forms of electronic communication, a much wider dissemination of warning information will be possible in the early years of the next century.

63. There is a potential risk associated with multiple and varied sources providing warning information, as the public can obtain inaccurate or contradictory information. Official, authenticating authorities, whether of a scientific or political legitimacy, can be more easily bypassed in ways that become detrimental to established emergency procedures. With increased availability of technology, there is an associated need to take into account human factors; local relationships, both institutional as well as interpersonal, must be factored into the warning process.

64. Vulnerability analysis and risk assessment essential for sound early warning practices can only be effective if disaster-prone countries are able to incorporate them into an institutional process that includes community involvement. The human dimension of utilizing technological advances, particularly in the feasibility of application in local community surroundings, is an issue which developmental processes must increasingly embody. A well-focused system, based on an accurate understanding of the need, must reflect the knowledge, technical and human resources available within local communities.

65. Donor governments should be encouraged to include a local component of disaster-resistant communications into telecommunications or similar infrastructure projects that extend basic services to local communities. Within the United Nations, the further development of autonomous basic research and education capabilities at local and national levels, such as that existing within the Office for Outer Space Affairs, should be supported to facilitate adaption of advanced technological methods at the local level. In addition, the business community, in particular, should be viewed as a valuable and virtually untapped resource in this respect.

B. Relevance of local perspectives

66. The foregoing observations reflect increasing scientific knowledge about hazard identification and analysis, coupled with the possibilities for advances in telecommunications and information technology. It is already technically possible to forecast many hazard events and to communicate warnings, often in real time, to national authorities responsible for disaster management in a given country. In many contexts, however, these improvements have not been accompanied by a commensurate increase in the capability of disaster management

agencies and systems to use warning information to reduce risks at the national and local levels.

67. Much of the previous research and application has focused on improvements in hazard monitoring, forecasting and means of dissemination in macro scales of implementation. Unless national and local capabilities for basic early warning functions are improved within individual countries, external enhancements in hazard forecasting and telecommunications will not necessarily lead to successful mitigation practices. This is particularly relevant to the needs of developing countries, small island developing States, countries with economies in transition and others with special circumstances.

68. National disaster management authorities need to develop complementary and integrated sub-systems in order to transform warning information into effective and sustained risk reduction practices. These require organizational structures, information flows and decision-making protocols capable of acting effectively at both national and local levels to monitor and forecast hazards at those levels, and to generate risk scenarios that can indicate the potential impacts of an impending hazard event on specifically identified vulnerable groups and sectors. It is important to develop disaster preparedness strategies that include actions required to reduce losses and expected damage. Equally, the communication of timely information on impending hazard events, potential risk scenarios and preparedness strategies to distinct vulnerable groups and sectors must be expressed in a manner understandable by them so that appropriate mitigating action can be taken.

69. It is important that efforts to focus warning functions at the local level address the actual and full range of hazard types experienced locally, taking full account of patterns and trends in their evolution. Consideration needs to be given to the dynamic nature of the hazards and, equally, to the growth and alteration of local conditions that constitute social and economic measures of vulnerability. Local knowledge related to hazard occurrence, physical conditions of vulnerability and community coping strategies needs to complement other forms of scientific and technical data. The more transparent and inclusive these measures of data collection and utilization are, the more understanding that is created among the people concerned.

70. Experience demonstrates that warnings are more likely to be heeded and acted upon if they occur in association with programmes of public information and on-going education about risks. If vulnerable groups of people are familiar with the risk levels in areas in which they live, there is a greater probability that they have developed their own coping strategies.

71. The design and implementation of public information and education programmes should be an integral part of any comprehensive early warning or disaster management programme. They need to include effective communication strategies, taking account of both the form and the means of conveying the warning information. Above all, they must be relevant to the perceptions and local knowledge of those who receive warnings and are expected to act on them. Programmes must be sustainable over the long term if local early warning capabilities are to be maintained.

72. The overall emphasis of national disaster management agencies and systems must shift thinking from emergency response contingencies towards a better understanding and commitment to the values of risk reduction. Such a change in emphasis depends on national authorities making risk reduction a political priority at the national level and pursuing it with appropriate institutional reforms and necessary investment. The development of institutional capacity for disaster management also needs to be encouraged at the local level, particularly in a commitment to enhance the decision-making processes of vulnerable groups of people.

73. The more decentralized, participatory and risk-oriented a national disaster management system is, the more able it will be to develop, manage and support effective early warning practices. While support and broad direction from national authorities are essential, along with the important linkage to externally-derived information and communication mechanisms, specific functions can best be implemented through local understanding and commitment.

IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

74. The objective of early warning is to empower individuals and communities, threatened by natural or similar hazards, to act in sufficient time and in an appropriate manner so as to reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life and damage to property or fragile environments.

75. Risk assessment provides the basis for an effective warning system at any level of responsibility. It identifies potential threats from hazards and establishes the degree of local exposure or vulnerability to hazardous conditions. This knowledge is essential for policy decisions which translate warning information into effective preventive action.

76. Several groups must contribute to this empowerment. Each has a set of essential overlapping functions for which it should be responsible:

(a) Members of vulnerable populations should be aware of the hazards and the related effects to which they are exposed and be able to take specific actions themselves that will minimize their personal threat of loss or damage;

(b) Local communities should have sufficient familiarity with the hazards to which they are exposed and the understanding of advisory information received to be able to act in a manner to advise, instruct or engage the population in a manner that increases their safety or reduces the possible loss of resources on which the community depends;

(c) National Governments should prepare and issue hazard warnings for their national territory in a timely and effective manner and ensure that warnings and related protective guidance are directed to those populations determined to be most vulnerable to the hazard risk. The provision of support to local communities to utilize information and to develop operational capabilities is an essential function for the translation of early warning knowledge into risk reduction practices;

(d) Regional institutions should provide specialized knowledge, advice or benefit of experience in support of national efforts to develop or to sustain operational capabilities related to hazard risks experienced by countries that share a common geographical environment. Regional organizations are crucial to linking international capabilities to the particular needs of individual countries and in facilitating effective early warning practices among adjacent countries;

(e) International bodies should provide a means for the shared exchange of data and relevant knowledge as a basis for the efficient transfer of advisory information and the technical, material and organizational support necessary to ensure the development and operational capabilities of national authorities or agencies officially designated as responsible for early warning practice.

77. The following recommendations have been developed to advance an effective international mechanism for early warning under the auspices of the United Nations. The following activities, and the concentration of effort which they suggest, should proceed through the implementation of the IDNDR International Framework and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action:

(a) Future energies and resources should be concentrated on the development of operational early warning capabilities within disaster-prone countries. While attention has previously largely been paid to technical applications, there is now a need to concentrate on gaining human understanding and strengthening organizational relationships essential for effective early warning. This applies particularly to developing countries, small island developing States, countries in economic transition, and other countries of special circumstances;

(b) A long-term commitment to public awareness, information programmes and other educational activities that contribute to broad public understanding of locally experienced hazards, potential risks and the feasibility of disaster reduction measures is an essential requirement for effective and sustainable early warning systems;

(c) Early warning systems must be integrated within comprehensive disaster management programmes focused at local community levels. Also, improved coordination is necessary with national authorities and implementing agencies, at all levels;

(d) At the national level, operational early warning capabilities should be developed on the basis of the needs of those local communities assessed as being most exposed to natural hazard risks. A structured hazard assessment that incorporates high-resolution information about local hazards and vulnerabilities is essential for appropriately targeted early warning systems;

(e) Individual countries should undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of their national early warning and related response practices, which should include post-disaster audits of the performance of early warning and resulting actions during actual events. The results of such assessments should become a part of the justification for proposals to support regional or international mechanisms at the conclusion of the Decade;

(f) The international community should agree on guiding principles to assist national governments in their efforts to develop comprehensive and effective early warning systems. These principles should focus on a mutual understanding of essential early warning functions and on the use of common nomenclature, standard protocols and reporting practices;

(g) A consultative forum should be convened by the IDNDR comprising United Nations agencies and departments concerned with early warning to consider future operational early warning responsibilities for all geophysical hazards within the context of coordinated United Nations programmes for social and economic development. Recommendations from this forum should be considered at the Potsdam international early warning conference in September 1998, with a view to their possible inclusion in subsequent proposals for improved coordination of early warning practices made at the conclusion of the Decade;

(h) An assessment should be undertaken of the efficiency and suitability of existing international arrangements and designated organizational responsibilities in early warning for technological hazards and effects associated with environmental conditions. This assessment should be used to incorporate private sector interests and commercial capabilities into collaboration for improved early warning;

(i) Additional research is required to improve understanding of the nature and the effects of hazards. Increased emphasis should also be placed on integrating knowledge and experience derived from research into practical applications at national and local levels;

(j) Development banks and other investors in national economic development programmes should encourage greater emphasis on effective early warning practices as a means of protecting assets. A rationale for these systems should factor in the planning of national development policies, such as those promoted by bilateral development assistance programmes or programmes administered through the United Nations resident coordinator system.

78. Improved early warning for natural and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment is no longer predominantly an issue of technological capability. Political commitment is required to apply the knowledge gained by experience and to allocate adequate resources through efficient organizational relationships. These instruments can develop the capacities with and among those people identified as most vulnerable. It is the acceptance of this orientation, in practice, which will provide improved early warning for natural and similar hazards in the twenty-first century.

Notes

[1] IASPEI Subcommission on Earthquake Prediction, 1991, "Evaluation of proposed earthquake precursors", M. Wyss editor: American Geophysical Union, Washington, D.C., p. 94 and IASPEI Subcommission on Earthquake Prediction, 1997, Special issue: earthquake prediction - state of the art, M. Wyss and R. Dmowska editors: Pageoph v. 149, No. 1, p. 264.

[2] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

[4] STI/PUB/765, IAEA, Vienna, 1987.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Measures taken following the cyclones and floods that have affected Madagascar

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/36 of 29 July 1994, adopted following the consideration of the initial report of the Secretary-General relating to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/234 of 14 February 1994, on emergency assistance to Madagascar.[1] In that resolution, appeals were made to the international community to assist the Government of Madagascar in its efforts to repair the damage caused by floods and cyclones in that country.

2. By resolution 1994/36, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to evaluate further, with the participation of the organizations of the United Nations system, the damage caused by the cyclones and floods that had struck Madagascar and the medium-term and long-term impact of those disasters on the national economy and to compile information that could promote concerted international assistance. It also requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to assist the Government in preparing a reconstruction and rehabilitation programme in the affected regions and sectors. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on this issue (A/50/292-E/1995/115) provided a summary of measures taken in those respects. The General Assembly, by resolution 50/58 I of 20 December 1995, urged that efforts be continued in that regard, and requested the Secretary-General to report on progress made.

3. Since 1994, Madagascar has been further devastated by natural disasters, notably cyclones, and the international community has assisted the Government in its efforts to provide appropriate relief and to effect vital reconstruction. The present report provides a summary of the action taken or currently under way, and highlights some of the continuing challenges.

II. Activities undertaken

A. Relief measures taken following cyclones, floods and locust infestations in Madagascar since 1994

4. Since 1994, generous support has been forthcoming from the international community to assist the Government of Madagascar in its efforts to alleviate the damage caused

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by cyclones, floods and locust infestations. The Government of Japan made a grant of US$ 2.667 million for the purchase of rice in 1995 in aid of victims of the various disasters and as a contribution to greater national food security. The European Development Fund contributed US$ 1.27 million for the purchase of food for the benefit of victims of cyclones and other disasters. Switzerland contributed US$ 734,000, through Caritas, for the local purchase and free distribution of food to victims in the temporary reception and welfare centres and in the population at large.

5. In response to a situation report prepared by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and its appeal for emergency assistance immediately after cyclones Daisy and Geralda in 1994, donors provided US$ 10.556 million in cash and kind to the Government of Madagascar. Bilateral donors who have notified the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of contributions include Australia, Austria, Canada, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, Luxembourg, Federated States of Micronesia, Norway, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Assistance has also been forthcoming from the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs made an emergency grant of US$ 30,000.

6. Several non-governmental organizations have contributed to assistance efforts. These included the Red Cross societies of Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, which generally contribute through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), as well as Caritas Germany.

7. In response to cyclone Bonita of March 1996, which inflicted major damage on the central parts of the east coast, contributions notified by donors to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in response to its appeal, totalled US$ 445,462, provided principally by France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Commission. The additional emergency grant by the Department of US$ 30,000 was used to finance the Centre de récupération nutritionelle intensive at Foulpointe, a nutritional rehabilitation facility for cyclone victims.

8. Cyclone Gretelle of January 1997 likewise elicited a positive response in cash and kind, through a combination of bilateral and multilateral channels, from Austria, China, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the Nippon Foundation and IFRC. The value of contributions notified to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was US$ 880,168. In addition, UNDP Madagascar also provided US$ 200,000 in support of the relief effort. Several multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations, notably Adventist Development and Relief Agency, CARE International, Médécins sans frontières (France), Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, Médécins du monde, Sécouristes sans frontières and Hélimission, made significant contributions.

9. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany and UNDP generously assisted Madagascar to contain the recent locust emergency of May 1997, through the provision of appropriate technical assistance and equipment valued at US$ 276,215.

B. Measures aimed at strengthening Madagascar's disaster management capacity

Technical support by the United Nations system

10. In 1994, FAO made a technical cooperation grant of US$ 48,000 to Madagascar for the purpose of jointly evaluating with WFP the damage caused to food production by cyclones Daisy and Geralda. The evaluation sought, in particular, to identify the action to be taken for the urgent rehabilitation of the devastated areas.

11. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has reported that, as a member of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Madagascar participated in a project, entitled "Regional meteorological cooperation project on tropical cyclones for the south-west Indian Ocean region", together with Comoros, Mauritius, La Réunion (France) and Seychelles. The project was formulated with the assistance of WMO, with the main objective of upgrading the tropical cyclone forecasting capabilities of IOC member countries. It was implemented between 1993 and 1996 with funds obtained under a loan from the European Development Fund by IOC countries. Under the project, Madagascar received meteorological equipment, such as weather observation stations, a primary data user system, a high-resolution picture transmission system, a hydrogen electrolyzer, a

transmitter, and several other items of equipment at a total cost of approximately 1,745,000 European currency units.

12. In January 1997, Madagascar requested assistance from WMO to replace meteorological equipment destroyed by tropical cyclone Gretelle. In response to that request, the Government of China agreed to provide Madagascar with the equipment for one weather observation station under the WMO voluntary cooperation programme

13. After the events of 1994, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has continued to provide technical advice in pre-disaster planning through technical consultancies. Modest but appropriate material aid was also provided. Those contributions have been described in previous reports to the General Assembly.

14. In the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs financed the participation of delegates from Madagascar in a workshop on natural disaster reduction in Burkina Faso in May 1995. During the workshop, representatives from Madagascar were briefed on disaster reduction management in general. In addition, the Department's Disaster Management Training Programme organized two workshops in Madagascar, a national exercise from 3 to 7 June 1996, and a regional workshop from 10 to 12 June 1996. Both events were organized in collaboration with the Government and IOC and benefited from the participation of 40 high-level governmental officials, as well as representatives of United Nations agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations, and donors.

15. The national workshop for Madagascar resulted in the definition of priority guidelines for action plans, aimed at strengthening national and regional capacities for preparing for and coping with the impact of disasters. Special attention was given to strengthening national capacity and reconstruction following the natural disasters of 1994 and cyclone Bonita in 1996. As follow-up to the workshop in Madagascar, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and UNDP have set up a committee which has the task of monitoring the implementation of recommendations elaborated by the workshop participants.

16. The results of the national workshop have served as a basis for:

(a) The creation of a team spirit and sustained commitment to natural disaster reduction management;

(b) The identification of the beneficial links between disaster reduction and sustainable development planning and practice;

(c) The enumeration of the critical measures and resources required to strengthen Madagascar's capacity for the efficient management of disasters, including during the relief phase;

(d) Initiating the process of the systematic development of a comprehensive national plan of action for disaster reduction management.

17. In close cooperation with the UNDP Office in Madagascar, an appraisal and planning mission will be sent by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to Madagascar towards the end of 1997 to work with the authorities and the other national partners on the above-mentioned issues. The priority task of the mission is to assist the Government of Madagascar in defining its comprehensive national policy and strategy for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. This should subsequently be developed into appropriate action disaster reduction programmes by a team of local and international experts, in collaboration with the Government, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the vulnerable communities. On this basis, the Department, UNDP and other United Nations system partners will continue their search for funding to permit programme implementation.

Financial and other material support from donors

18. The International Development Authority (IDA) had made a loan valued at US$ 13.1 million to enhance Madagascar's disaster preparedness capacity. Disbursements from those funds in 1995, amounting to US$ 2.78 million, were used to finance reconstruction efforts following cyclones Daisy and Geralda. Also in 1995, from another IDA loan, the Government disbursed US$ 3.51 million to strengthen food security and implement an expanded nutritional programme. The World Food Programme also made a significant contribution to strengthen Madagascar's food security in the event of sudden onset events, such as cyclones and floods, or slow-onset drought which is a recurrent feature in parts of the country.

19. Some US$ 2.955 million was disbursed in 1995, *inter alia*, to augment the revenues of the poorest and most vulnerable households in urban areas and to reduce the very high levels of malnutrition among children under five years of age. The Government of France also made a loan of US$ 683,000, of which US$ 206,000 was disbursed in 1995 for strengthening institutional preparedness in case of disaster.

20. In response to the damage caused by cyclone Cynthia, the Government of Switzerland made a grant of US$ 3.954 million for the upgrading of secondary and tertiary channels of the Dabara Morondava Canal. This programme, in which the Ministry of Agriculture is the designated executing agency, will operate on the basis of a food-for-work scheme.

C. Continuing challenges

21. Several initiatives, reflected in the previous report to the Assembly, have yet to be realized. Substantial external financial support is required to support the national fund for natural disasters, comprising funds for the reconstruction and maintenance of highway infrastructure, public buildings and the development of fuel buffer stocks. Similarly, the rehabilitation of cultivated areas and development of cultivable land areas require systematic and sustained attention. The development of a reliable system for monitoring and early warning of the level of staple and other food stocks takes on an added urgency owing to the likely impact on Madagascar of the current El Niño phenomenon.

III. Concluding observations

22. In addition to cyclones and the resulting floods, Madagascar is vulnerable to natural hazards, including pest infestation, bush fires, seismic activity, landslides and recurrent drought. While the response of the international community to relief needs in the aftermath of disaster events has been consistently good, assistance with vital rehabilitation and durable reconstruction efforts has not been of the desired level. Yet, investment in a comprehensive national disaster reduction management strategy, plan and programme which encompass pre-disaster mitigation and durable post-disaster reconstruction is an investment in sound environmental management and balanced, durable development.

23. Concerned entities of the United Nations system will, therefore, continue to mobilize the international community to substantively address the outstanding issues that would enhance Madagascar's capacity to manage, at the various stages, the effects of recurrent natural disasters. The forthcoming appraisal and planning mission will lay the foundations of comprehensive, multi-sectoral disaster reduction management, drawing upon international and local expertise. The various bilateral and multilateral development partners of Madagascar will then have an opportunity to assist the Government in the realization of its natural disaster reduction management strategy for all hazards.

Notes

[1] E/1994/66

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International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 50/58 D of 12 December 1995 on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, called upon all parties to do their utmost to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Peace Accords for Angola (S/22609, annex), thus creating conditions conducive to the economic rehabilitation of the country. The Assembly expressed its appreciation to all States, United Nations organizations and other donors for the substantial humanitarian assistance rendered to Angola during the past two years, and appealed for continued and generous contributions in support of humanitarian activities facilitating the current transition to peace. Furthermore, the Assembly appealed to all Governments and international and private institutions that announced their contributions at the Round-Table Conference of Donors to honour their commitments, and encouraged the Government of Angola to proceed with its programme of economic rehabilitation, including through the implementation of the Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation Programme, and to overcome its social, economic and financial crisis. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report describes the humanitarian assistance activities carried out in Angola since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary General on 12 September 1995 (A/50/424), and highlights the progress made in the implementation of humanitarian activities and the demobilization process in the context of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex). The report covers humanitarian activities up to 30 September 1997.

II. Current situation in Angola

3. Significant developments have taken place in the sphere of humanitarian activities and especially in the quartering and demobilization of ex-UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) troops. During the last quarter of 1995 and the first quarter of 1996, progress was made in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol according to a schedule endorsed by the Joint Commission. However, the pace of implementation was considerably slower than planned owing to the long and difficult process of building political confidence. Continued political and military tensions impeded both the return of the displaced and refugees to their home areas and the implementation of the quartering and demobilization of UNITA soldiers.

4. The construction of 15 quartering areas by the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), with the assistance of brigades of UNITA soldiers, commenced in September 1995 and was completed by June 1996. UNITA soldiers began arriving at the quartering areas on 20 November 1995 and the quartering process was finally completed at the end of 1996, with a total of 65,711 registered troops. To support this exercise, a comprehensive multi-sectoral humanitarian programme was implemented by 11 international non-governmental organizations (with the assistance of partner United Nations agencies and international organizations). This effort was coordinated in Angola by the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Angola of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which ensured that troops received basic humanitarian assistance during their quartering, demobilization and reintegration into Angolan society.

5. At the beginning of 1996, security risks declined and humanitarian activities began to expand into previously inaccessible areas in the country. At the same time, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations began to move from emergency to rehabilitation programmes. To facilitate the broadening of activities, UNAVEM engineering companies, United Nations demining brigades, the World Food Programme (WFP) and various international non-governmental organizations involved in mine tracing and clearance repaired destroyed bridges and cleared mines from principal roads. By July 1996, enhanced access allowed humanitarian agencies to deliver 70 per cent of humanitarian assistance by road, as compared to 1995 when 70 per cent was delivered by air. However, restrictions on the free circulation of people and goods continued to constrain some humanitarian activities.

6. Following the establishment of a Technical Working Group for Demobilization and Reintegration of the Joint Commission, and in consultation and coordination with the partners involved, including the Government of Angola, UNITA, UNAVEM III, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations, the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Angola provided technical assistance to the Group in the design of a comprehensive national demobilization and reintegration programme. This culminated, on 15 August 1996, in the endorsement by the Council of Ministers of the National Plan for Demobilization and Reintegration of ex-military personnel, prepared by the Working Group. The Plan established the institutional and programmatic framework for the implementation of demobilization and reintegration

in Angola, including the definition of the legal and ad hoc benefits to be provided by the Government and the international community, respectively, for a target population of approximately 100,000 ex-military personnel (both ex-FAA (Forças Armadas Angolanas) and ex-UNITA), together with their dependants.

7. However, owing to delays in the implementation of other political and military tasks associated with the Lusaka Protocol, demobilization did not begin until September 1996. The first phase began with a special group of under-age UNITA military personnel, focusing on family-tracing activities. On 10 December 1996, UNITA declared that all its demobilization obligations had been completed, including the quartering of all its troops and the handover of all its weapons and ammunition to UNAVEM III. In addition, the Joint Commission received assurances on the same day from the Government that all political tasks would be concluded by 31 December 1996. These included UNITA deputies taking their seats in the National Assembly, the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, extension of state administration throughout the country and a decision on the special status for UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi.

8. At the end of 1996, United Nations agencies, which had received approximately $132 million in response to the 1996 appeal, undertook a review of the progress made in the implementation of humanitarian activities. Participating agencies reported a variety of achievements, including the extension of humanitarian efforts to all but one fifth of the national territory; the repair of more than 55 bridges and the demining of over 5,000 kilometres of primary and secondary roads; the provision of food assistance to approximately 1.2 million beneficiaries; the provision of seeds and tools to more than 500,000 families; the delivery of health services, including expanded immunization activities benefiting some 2 million children with protection against polio and measles; the quartering of over 70,000 ex-UNITA troops and the provision of multisectoral humanitarian assistance to them, as well as to more than 130,000 family members; the commencement of humanitarian programmes in support of the military war-disabled in five special centres and the commencement of demobilization of under-age ex-UNITA military personnel.

9. By December 1996, more than 60 international and 58 national non-governmental organizations were involved in a mixture of emergency and rehabilitation programmes in the 18 provinces of Angola. Other organizations, such as the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Swiss Humanitarian Aid, were also active in Angola, particularly through transition programmes, with an emphasis on rehabilitation and reconstruction where possible.

10. On 11 December 1996, the Security Council adopted resolution 1087 (1996) and, while concerned about the delays in the consolidation of the military and political tasks stipulated in the Lusaka Protocol, authorized the Secretary-General to commence the progressive withdrawal of UNAVEM III formed military units.

11. In early 1997, United Nations agencies in Angola reviewed the humanitarian programme in order to develop a common strategy for the 1997 consolidated inter-agency appeal. The strategy for 1997 builds on that articulated in the 1996 appeal, with the focus on ensuring the continuity of support to the demobilization process; continued assistance to war-affected populations; developing a coordinated and phased approach to the return and reintegration of demobilized soldiers, internally displaced persons and refugees; and improving access to vulnerable groups and delivery capacity to new areas.

12. During the first part of 1997, delays in the quartering and demobilization process and the failure of both parties to guarantee free movement of persons and goods, as well as to ensure viable security conditions, prevented the timely completion of the demobilization phase as well as the return of the majority of internally displaced persons. Specifically, illegal checkpoints remained throughout the country and the presence of mines on some primary and secondary roads continued to inhibit both the return of displaced populations and access for humanitarian organizations. Coordination of humanitarian operations was constrained by the absence of UNITA at provincial humanitarian coordination group meetings and the rare participation of UNITA in other coordination mechanisms in the provinces. Banditry and sporadic fighting between the civil defence and other armed groups caused the deaths of United Nations and non-governmental organization workers during the latter part of 1996 and the first months of 1997. In Benguela province, the escalation of attacks by armed groups resulted in the displacement of more than 10,000 people.

13. The commencement of the withdrawal of UNAVEM III forces brought forth the need to revise the calendar for demobilization originally envisaged in the Lusaka Protocol. As a result, a rapid demobilization plan was formulated in February 1997 by the Technical Working Group for Demobilization and Reintegration and endorsed by the Joint Commission in early April. Demobilization of excess UNITA troops from quartering areas in the central region began officially on 14 April 1997. The demobilization of under-age UNITA military personnel, which had

commenced at an earlier stage, continued. The rapid demobilization plan was closely synchronized with the reduction of UNAVEM III troops and was planned to be carried out in six months, ending in September 1997 (including one month contingency).

14. Increasing pressure by the international community resulted in a renewed effort by the two sides to consolidate peace. In particular, during the visit of the Secretary-General to Angola in March 1997, the Joint Commission announced that the selection of ex-UNITA troops for the United Armed Forces had been completed and the incorporation of those troops was under way. Furthermore, by the end of the visit, the UNITA deputies arrived in Luanda to take up their seats in the National Assembly and the National Congress voted on the new status of the leader of UNITA as the President of the largest opposition party. The Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was officially inaugurated on 11 April 1997.

15. In April 1997, positive political developments, including the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, seemed to give a boost to the peace process. On 16 April 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1106 (1997), in which the two parties were urged to complete all other outstanding military and political tasks as stipulated in the Lusaka Protocol. In addition, the Council extended the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 to assist in the implementation of the remaining tasks. It also requested the Secretary-General to complete the withdrawal of UNAVEM military units as scheduled.

16. However, by mid-May 1997 and parallel with the events occurring in the former Zaire, the political and military situation began to deteriorate, with an increase in clashes between FAA and UNITA in the province of Lunda Norte. By the end of June, the security situation throughout the country had deteriorated significantly and a reported 8,000 people had been newly displaced to government controlled areas owing to the clashes in Lunda Norte. In addition, new internally displaced persons were reported in Benguela and Huila provinces as a result of banditry, and additional internally displaced persons arrived in the town of Malange (Malange province) owing to the actions of UNITA authorities, including forced conscription.

17. On 30 June 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1118 (1997), in which it established the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) in lieu of UNAVEM III. MONUA was mandated, *inter alia*, to facilitate the registration, verification and demobilization of the additional 6,052 armed personnel declared by UNITA to be under its control, including those in the security detachment of the President of UNITA, the "mining police" and "residual forces". These troops had been previously unknown, with the exception of the presidential guard. Therefore, no provisions (programmatic, financial or otherwise) had been made for their demobilization within the framework of the Lusaka Protocol.

III. Humanitarian assistance

A. General

18. Despite significant progress in expanding overland access since mid-1995, large stretches of road still remained to be opened, specifically in the eastern part of the country. By the end of 1995, increased military tension and insecurity resulted in a reduction of humanitarian activities as overland convoys were denied clearance, relief flights were restricted and road routes were closed in some areas owing to mine accidents which greatly inhibited humanitarian activities. In response to those incidents, the humanitarian community advocated strongly for the right of all civilians in need to receive humanitarian assistance, and pressured the parties to allow the resumption of activities.

19. Since 1996, the trend of humanitarian activities has shifted as United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been readjusting programmes to adapt to the new situation. This has mainly meant that rehabilitation is taking place on a very limited scale and resettlement programmes have been stalled in most of the provinces, except the southern and western areas of Huila, Benguela, Cunene and Namibe. In other parts of the country, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations are restricting their movements and in some cases reducing non-essential staff to avoid unnecessary security risks (this is especially relevant in the provinces of Malange, Uige, Moxico and the Lundas). Some agencies are limiting the scope of their reconstruction programmes (in terms of resources and geographical coverage), while others are being confronted with an increase of new displaced populations and are enhancing, when possible, their rapid response capacity. This is especially so in the provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul where, following the armed clashes of June 1997, more than 10,000 people have been displaced from UNITA areas into the government-held towns of Nzaji and Saurimo. Further displacement is also occurring owing to perceived or real insecurity in the provinces of Malange and Huila. In Benguela province, government authorities claim that 253,000 new internally displaced persons have been registered since February 1997.

Additionally, the arrival of some 1,500 Rwandan and Burundese asylum seekers to the remote border town of Luau, in Moxico province, has necessitated the mobilization of both human and material resources in order to address their immediate emergency requirements. For example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had to start a special emergency response programme, while its ongoing returnee programme was progressing at a reduced pace owing to dwindling donor support and an uncertain political environment.

B. Political and military developments affecting humanitarian relief efforts

20. During the reporting period and particularly by mid-1996, general insecurity seriously affected areas with large concentrations of at-risk populations, especially in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces. Events in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) in May 1997 led to further fighting between the Government and UNITA, particularly in areas along the border, affecting delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups in those areas. In mid-May 1997, UNAVEM reported that there were some 7,000 refugees, mostly women and children in poor condition, who had crossed into Angola from Zaire. However, lack of access by humanitarian agencies to the area did not enable the verification of those refugees and the Government later reported that they had repatriated the refugees to Zaire. Also, certain areas in Benguela and Huila provinces have been seriously affected by banditry, including acts of armed robbery which have been perpetrated by, among others, elements of the so-called civil defence corps. On several occasions, the Joint Commission called on the Government and UNITA to cooperate closely in stopping the spread of lawlessness, which put new populations at risk and set back ongoing relief projects. Nonetheless, there were numerous serious incidents, some of which claimed the lives of humanitarian personnel.

21. In April 1996, an ambush on the Benguela-Huambo road resulted in the death of two United Nations observers and an international staff member of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM). The impact on the humanitarian community was extremely negative and road transport in the area was suspended. In July 1996, two UNAVEM soldiers were killed and four injured in a mine accident on the Cacolo-Saurimo road in Lunda Sul province. The non-governmental organizations in the area subsequently suspended operations until authorities confirmed that the road was cleared of mines. During September 1996, humanitarian activities in Bie, Moxico and Uige were reduced following an increase in security incidents, including harassment of relief workers. The head of the WFP sub-office in N'dalatando was shot and killed in December 1996 while on a mission tracing families of under-age military personnel in Kuanza Norte province, and the coordinator from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was shot and killed on the road between Cubal and Benguela on 7 February 1997.

22. In May 1997, a peacekeeper was shot and killed while escorting a convoy in the province of Huambo. On 7 June 1997, humanitarian agencies in Luau, Moxico province, were held by UNITA authorities against their will. In the same month, ADRA international staff were beaten by UNITA armed personnel in Malange province. In addition, re-mining activities were reported, in some cases with the clear intention of doing harm to international humanitarian staff. Re-mining has also negatively affected the freedom of movement. Additionally, there was looting of relief stocks, particularly food, salt and other essential equipment, by UNITA personnel or civilians during the closure of some of the selection and demobilization centres.

23. Despite the various appeals addressed to both the Government and UNITA, incidents resulting from restrictions imposed by local officials on the movement of relief organizations continued to occur. One such incident took place on 4 September 1997 when a joint mission, composed of representatives of MONUA, WFP and the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance was denied authorization to proceed at a checkpoint on the river Luembe (Lunda Norte province). As a result, humanitarian assistance was suspended for several hundred internally displaced persons in the region. The humanitarian community remains very concerned about this incident, which has restricted access to populations in need.

C. Demobilization and reintegration

24. A vital component of the Lusaka Accords required the quartering, demobilization and reintegration of more than 100,000 troops, including under-age and war-disabled military personnel. To support this process, a Demobilization and Reintegration Office was established in the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance on 1 February 1995.

25. On 20 November 1995, a year after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol, the quartering of UNITA soldiers began in Vila Nova, Huambo province, under the supervision of

the United Nations, and was progressively extended to the other 14 quartering areas throughout the country. The last quartering area, Muchinda, was established only in June 1996, after a long and difficult process. On 10 December 1996, UNITA declared that it had quartered all its troops, with the exception of the presidential guard, and had surrendered all its lethal war material. By 10 December 1996, a total of 65,686 UNITA soldiers had been officially registered and disarmed in the 15 quartering areas.

26. A comprehensive humanitarian programme was implemented in the quartering areas by non-governmental organizations which ensured that troops received basic assistance for their survival and reintegration into Angolan society. The programme included the identification and registration of more than 70,000 UNITA troops, their dependants, and vulnerable groups; collection of socio-economic data for the purpose of reinsertion and reintegration, and food and non-food assistance; health assistance and vaccination campaigns; civic training programmes on national reconciliation and human rights issues; family tracing for under-age soldiers; and orthopaedic assistance for the war-disabled.

27. In mid-1996 a Technical Working Group on Demobilization and Reintegration was established to formulate the institutional and programmatic framework for the demobilization process under the chairmanship of the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance. The Working Group produced the National Plan for Demobilization and Reintegration of ex-military personnel, which was endorsed by the Angolan Council of Ministers on 15 August 1996. According to the Plan, each side was to demobilize approximately 50,000 soldiers. The Government was to contribute 63,700 men to the new Angolan Armed Forces, while UNITA was to provide 26,300, to form a combined military force of 90,000 men. The Plan also identified a total of 3,000 under-age soldiers (1,500 from each side) and 30,000 military war-disabled (15,000 from each side). By August 1997, some 10,933 UNITA troops had been incorporated into FAA.

28. The decision of the Security Council in December 1996 to start the withdrawal of UNAVEM III forces from the country brought forth the need to revise the strategy for demobilization originally established in the Lusaka Protocol. As a result, a rapid demobilization plan was formulated by the Working Group and endorsed by the Joint Commission on 20 February 1997. The initial schedule called for a February to June (July as contingency) 1997 exercise. As implementation only began on 14 April 1997, the planned completion date was extended to August 1997. The rapid demobilization plan also foresaw the simultaneous demobilization of the remaining vulnerable groups (under-age and disabled) and excess troops. The implementation of the rapid demobilization plan was to be undertaken following a regional approach which coincided with the drawdown plan for the United Nations forces.

29. The first phase of the rapid demobilization plan was successfully concluded in mid-June 1997 with the closure of the first five selection and demobilization centres as well as three special centres for war-disabled military personnel. The second phase of the demobilization activities commenced in June at the selection and demobilization centres in northern Angola and the third phase commenced in mid-July in the south-east. As at 29 September 1997, a total of 23,535 ex-UNITA troops had been demobilized within the context of the ongoing rapid demobilization exercise. Taking into account the 4,475 under-age troops and the 3,284 military war-disabled that had already been demobilized, the total number of demobilized personnel as at the end of September 1997 was 31,294. Some 11,355 soldiers were still in the selection and demobilization centres awaiting demobilization, while 25,037 soldiers had deserted.

30. In the context of the social and economic reinsertion of demobilized troops, the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance is collaborating with the Government of Angola, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (through counselling and referral services and quick impact projects), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations, to finalize programmes. However, ongoing efforts to establish the reintegration network for demobilized personnel were affected by rising tensions and limited access to resettlement locations in the countryside. While demobilization is being implemented successfully from a technical and administrative viewpoint, the Unit has repeatedly brought to the attention of the Joint Commission and its partners concerns about periodic incidents affecting demobilization and about the future successful social reintegration of demobilized personnel.

31. The Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance has developed special programmes to facilitate and support the demobilization and reintegration of war-disabled and under-age soldiers. While it was initially planned that all military personnel would be quartered after an assessment on the ground, it was agreed that for humanitarian reasons it was better to conduct registration and demobilization *in situ* for war-disabled soldiers in seven special centres.

32. Demobilization began with the under-age soldiers in September 1996, but was temporarily suspended in October 1996 following reports of irregularities by UNITA, including human rights violations affecting the demobilized. A set of policies was developed by the Working Group stating that basic human rights must be respected and stipulating that no under-age soldiers would be demobilized until families were identified or a responsible adult was appointed at reception points. In December 1996, after the Security Council had endorsed the basic principles articulated by the Working Group and called for those principles to be respected, demobilization re-commenced. The demobilization of under-age soldiers continued within the context of the rapid demobilization plan following a regional approach. As at 29 September 1997, 3,284 under-age and 6,113 war-disabled soldiers have been demobilized and three of the seven special centres were officially closed.

D. Refugees and internally displaced persons

33. The UNHCR repatriation and reintegration programme in Angola aims at repatriating the refugee caseload in neighbouring countries and is based on the assumption that progress in the peace process would inspire sufficient confidence among refugees in neighbouring countries to spark major movement. UNHCR has built up nine field offices with international staff in major receiving community areas in Angola to facilitate the reintegration process of returning refugees. Most of the field locations are in UNITA-controlled areas. Operational capacity in major countries of asylum has been strengthened to prepare for the repatriation of the refugee communities there. In providing assistance, UNHCR is taking an area-based approach by targeting communal infrastructure in order not to discriminate against other population groups resident in returnee areas.

34. Owing to the generally unstable and slow progress of national reconciliation, UNHCR neither promoted nor embarked on an organized repatriation of Angolan refugees from neighbouring countries. Rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, which was initiated in 1995, continued at an increased rate in 1996. Well over $12 million out of $17 million disbursed under the Angolan repatriation and reintegration operation was spent in the asylum countries.

35. Major impediments to the repatriation process were the inaccessibility of many areas of return as a result of landmines, the absence of passable roads or bridges and security problems. Additionally, a lack of funding reduced the capacity of UNHCR and its partners to establish appropriate conditions for the reintegration of the returnees. In July 1997, UNHCR reviewed its programme and reduced its appeal from $38 million to $21 million. Consequently, UNHCR will not undertake any organized repatriation in 1997 but will continue to support spontaneous returnees.

36. In June 1997 there was a major influx of internally displaced persons to the town of Andrada, Lunda Norte province, owing to armed clashes in the north-eastern and southern part of the province. A number of humanitarian assessment missions visited the towns of Andrada, Malundi and Cossa and it was estimated that more than 7,000 people were newly displaced in the area. Humanitarian agencies have provided assistance to meet the emergency. However, limited resources and constrained access to those areas prevented assistance from being provided to all the affected population.

E. Relief food assistance

37. Throughout 1995 and 1996, the efforts of the World Food Programme were directed at reducing Angola's dependency on food aid. To increase food security, irrigation canals were built. WFP also distributed food, and at planting time seeds and tools were provided. More than 80,000 workers and their families benefited, on a monthly basis, from food channelled through food-for-work projects. It is estimated that the total number of beneficiaries was 4 million. In 1996, WFP delivered a total of 114,000 metric tons of humanitarian goods by road and by air, including over 14,000 metric tons of non-food items. From January through June 1997, WFP delivered 83,391 metric tons of food aid from WFP stocks, including the European Union, Save the Children (United States) and United States Agency for International Development food-for-peace donations.

38. WFP passenger aircraft supported the international and national humanitarian community by facilitating access to remote areas, rapid assessment missions and medical evacuations. WFP also actively supported the opening of roads during 1996 to encourage the overland transport of humanitarian supplies and to promote the free circulation of people, goods and services. A new protracted relief operation was approved by the WFP Executive Board in January 1997. The project includes a food-for-work component for the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure, mainly in areas of resettlement.

39. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to be the focal point for the assessment of crop and food supplies as well as for all activities related to food production and emergency assistance to the agricultural sector (including livestock and

forestry). During the transition from relief assistance to rehabilitation, FAO will place greater emphasis on training and institutional capacity-building rather than on input distribution. Emergency interventions will be tailored to the needs of each region and target group, with particular attention to supporting the return and resettlement of displaced populations. FAO is also developing programmes for the participation of demobilized soldiers in labour-intensive agricultural activities.

40. Since the resumption of its activities in Angola, FAO has monitored crop conditions and the food supply situation in the country through its Global Information and Early Warning System. An FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission visited Angola from 22 April to 12 May 1997 to estimate the 1996/97 harvest of food crops and cereal import requirements for the 1997/98 marketing year, including food aid. In 1997, in contrast to previous years, the mission was able to visit most provinces at harvest time. The mission forecast an estimated cereal production of 431,000 tons, which is 14 per cent lower than last year, mainly owing to insufficient rain.

41. One of the main objectives of FAO in Angola has been to support and assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Institute for Agricultural Development in coordinating and strengthening their participation in the emergency programme, as well as providing technical assistance to the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance and non-governmental organizations in agriculture-related matters. Particular attention has been focused on the seeds and tools distribution programme.

F. Non-food assistance

42. During the reporting period, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided assistance in the following areas: successful implementation of national immunization days for polio, increasing vaccination coverage to an estimated 80 per cent of women and children; further reductions in measles incidence in urban areas; expansion of salt iodization activities; support to the demobilization of under-age soldiers and reintegration with their families; support for internally displaced persons and the families of soldiers in and around quartering areas; strengthening national coordination capacity and increasing donor commitments in the water and environmental sanitation sector; expansion of mine-awareness activities, especially linked to schools; successful completion of a multiple indicator cluster survey; development of innovative approaches in providing emergency education; enhanced alliances with church and local opinion leaders with respect to social mobilization for child survival, development and protection; stronger collaboration with non-governmental organizations and increased focus on the essential drugs programme in revitalizing the primary health care system.

43. UNICEF interventions targeted a number of sectors and activities including advocacy efforts on behalf of Angolan children, particularly those in need of special protection measures. UNICEF and key non-governmental organizations played a prominent role in providing assistance to the Government in the difficult areas of psychosocial trauma and family reunification. UNICEF was also active in the promotion of an integrated approach to the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance, linking mine-awareness and education activities with mine labelling, and rehabilitation and reintegration of disabled victims.

44. During the reporting period, the World Health Organization (WHO)was involved in a variety of activities, including providing technical assistance for the demobilization process to the Ministry of Health, UNITA and other United Nations and non-governmental organizations. A coordination team comprising health professionals from the National Public Health Bureau, the National Public Health Laboratory, supported by cooperation from the Government of Italy, WHO and the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance was set up to provide a quick response for the investigation and management of epidemics. WHO assisted the Government in developing policies on important health issues, including the national campaign against polio which was jointly implemented by the Ministry of Health and UNITA. In 1997, the strengthening of the surveillance and reporting system in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations continues to be a priority for WHO.

45. On 6 November 1995, the UNDP Trust Fund for Angola was established to enhance UNDP activities in support of the Government's Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation Programme as agreed at the Angola Round-Table Conference held at Brussels in September 1995. The purpose of the Trust Fund is to provide assistance to the Government for the rehabilitation of productive capacity, social sectors, infrastructure and roads, as well as institutional capacity-building. In support of the Programme, the UNDP project entitled "Belgium support to United Nations Volunteers: Multisectoral assistance" employed a cadre of national and international United Nations Volunteers to supply technical support to priority rehabilitation projects.

46. The UNDP Trust Fund also supported the programme for support to the reintegration of demobilized soldiers, involving 14 provincial offices, with social promoters, counselling and referral services coordinators and quick impact projects. In addition, the Trust Fund supports vocational training and micro-enterprise promotion for demobilized soldiers. These programmes were designed to assist with the social reintegration of the demobilized soldiers into civil society.

47. Staff of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited Luanda in November 1996 and May/June 1997 to carry out consultations on macroeconomic policies and to continue discussions on an economic stabilization and reform programme that could be supported by the Fund. The most recent mission verified encouraging progress in macroeconomic management: in contrast to the inflation rate of some 10,650 per cent during the 12 months ending in June 1996, inflation had been held to an estimated 95 per cent for the 12 months ending June 1997. In addition, the authorities have begun the development of a medium-term programme intended to address issues of liberalization, privatization and other structural reforms.

G. Mine activities

48. Angola is one of the most mine-infested countries in the world. The number of landmines is estimated to be between 10 million and 15 million. UNAVEM III has conducted demining activities in Angola, with highest priority given to clearing roads to enable peacekeeping forces, humanitarian personnel and civilians to move freely. In total, the United Nations and its counterparts have cleared and verified about 9,500 kilometres of road. At the end of 1995, UNAVEM III established the Central Mine Action Training School, which was handed over to the Angolan National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Devices (INAROE) in early 1997. Thus far, seven demining brigades, with 60 personnel each, have been trained.

49. The responsibility for mine clearance in Angola is vested in the Ministry of Social Assistance and Insertion and is carried out by INAROE. INAROE has been responsible for the coordination and undertaking of all mine-removal operations to facilitate human settlement and the free movement of people and goods. Since its formation, INAROE, on behalf of the Ministry, has established mine-clearance policies, strategies and priorities in cooperation with regional district authorities. Regional plans incorporate priorities for mine clearance, mine awareness, survey tasks and mined-area marking.

50. In order to provide a sustainable base for peace and economic development, UNDP approved the project on support to the development of mine clearance and awareness capacity involving INAROE. The full-scale project has a budget of $25,400,000. Currently, funds amount to $2.9 million, of which the United Nations has provided $1.9 million and UNDP $1 million. Additional contributions to the Trust Fund are needed in order to carry out the project activities over the next two years.

51. In the forefront of the demining effort are international demining non-governmental organizations conducting mine clearance in support of the humanitarian agencies operating in Angola. The specialist mine-clearance non-governmental organizations are all expected to continue to undertake mine survey and clearance across the national territory in collaboration with INAROE.

IV. Assistance by Member States and other donors

52. The United Nations Updated Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola, covering the period from January to December 1996, sought a total of US$ 187,294,074 in humanitarian assistance. Of this total, $112,355,731 (60 per cent) was received in pledges and contributions. A new United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal was launched by the Secretary-General in March 1997, covering the period from January to December 1997. The Appeal seeks $228,447,999. As at 22 September 1997, $61,897,668 (28.7 per cent) had been received in pledges and contributions.

53. Since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/50/424), the international community has made significant contributions to Angola and provided valuable support towards the peace process.

54. On 2 June 1997, the Secretary-General invited Member States and other donors to provide information on assistance extended to Angola in the framework of General Assembly resolution 50/58 D. Replies were received from six Member States.

China

55. China provided 31,000 blankets, 63,000 garments, 12,000 flashlights, 600 gas lamps, 50,000 axes, 31,000 hoes and a consignment of stationary.

Ireland

56. In 1996, Ireland provided 50,000 Irish pounds for emergency programmes and £169,070 for rehabilitation projects. An additional £409,645 has been provided in 1997 for rehabilitation projects.

Luxembourg

57. Luxembourg has provided 10 million Luxembourg francs for return and resettlement assistance through IOM.

Sweden

58. Sweden has had a development cooperation programme in Angola since 1975. During the period from June 1995 to June 1997, Sweden provided rehabilitation assistance to Angola, *inter alia*, in the following areas: repatriation of refugees, assistance to displaced persons, general humanitarian assistance, demining, road rehabilitation and demobilization of soldiers. Assistance in those areas during the period amounted to 233 million Swedish kronor. These funds have been channelled through UNHCR, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, WFP, IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and a number of Swedish non-governmental organizations.

Switzerland

59. In 1996, Switzerland provided approximately US$ 3 million in humanitarian assistance to Angola. In 1997, Switzerland has contributed food aid and logistical support for the demobilization programme in the amount of $912,000.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

60. Since April 1996, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has contributed £5.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Angola. The Funds were committed to the following organizations: UNICEF, UNDP, the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, WFP, WHO, IOM, Save the Children (United Kingdom), CARE International and Concern Worldwide.

V. Conclusions

61. Following 30 years of war, the signing of the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 was a signal of hope for the people of Angola. Throughout 1996 and 1997, the two parties to the conflict have been encouraged and urged by the international community to complete the tasks required by the Protocol. In late 1996 and early 1997, progress was made in satisfying the commitments of the Protocol, including the quartering of more than 78,000 UNITA troops. Additional progress was achieved in the demobilization of under-age military personnel and in initiating the rapid demobilization plan. On 11 April 1997, the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was formed and efforts begun to transform UNITA from a guerrilla movement into a political party. However, clashes between government forces and UNITA in the diamond-rich Lunda Norte province in May, have threatened the peace and raised questions regarding the commitment of the parties to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion.

62. Despite the prevailing tense situation throughout Angola and the recent stalemate in the peace process, humanitarian organizations have continued to implement their programmes, with a mix of both emergency and reconstruction projects under way in both government-controlled and UNITA-controlled areas. Unfortunately, increased insecurity has resulted in a slowdown of large-scale rehabilitation projects and has delayed the resettlement plans envisioned for the 1 million internally displaced persons and 300,000 Angolan refugees in neighbouring countries. Owing to these developments, United Nations agencies and their partners are currently planning for the remainder of 1997. They are holding regular and close consultations with government counterparts, the donor community and non-governmental organization partners in order to monitor the situation and make contingency plans for possible emergency response.

63. Peace, security and sustained commitment by all parties to honour the letter and spirit of the Lusaka Protocol are essential to enable the humanitarian community to deliver assistance to the Angolan people. Without these prerequisites, humanitarian assistance will continue to be constrained. More importantly, a successful transition to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development cannot occur. The Secretary-General calls upon all parties to actively demonstrate their commitment to peace in order to allow the Angolan people to realize a bright, secure and prosperous future.

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Agenda items 40 and 81
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS
AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 24 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Strasbourg joint statement made by the President of the Azerbaijani Republic, Mr. Heydar Aliyev, and the President of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, at their meeting during the course of the summit of the Council of Europe, held at Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 81, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar G. KOULIEV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan
to the United Nations

97-30012 (E) 071197 111197

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ANNEX

Strasbourg joint statement by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia dated 10 October 1997

(Original: Russian)

Azerbaijan and Armenia remain committed to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict by political means in the first place through negotiations.

Azerbaijan and Armenia believe that the framework of the Minsk Group and the activity of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference are aimed at establishing a basis which, with a constructive attitude by all the parties involved in the conflict, would make it possible to achieve real progress in the settlement of the conflict.

Azerbaijan and Armenia believe that the latest proposals of the co-Chairmen are an encouraging basis for the resumption of negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group.

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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REGIONAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 4 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text of the statement by the President of the Russian Federation on security guarantees for the Baltic countries and confidence-building measures in relations between them and the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 40, 72 (b) and 81.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

97-30097 (E) 061197 061197

ANNEX

Statement by the President of the Russian Federation on security guarantees for the Baltic countries and confidence-building measures in relations between them and the Russian Federation

Continuing our firm policy of strengthening good-neighbourliness and developing all around mutually advantageous cooperation with the Baltic States, we propose to structure our relations on a solid basis of mutual security and confidence.

The Russian Federation has a vital interest in the security and stability of its Baltic neighbours. We should like our common border not to separate us, but to bring us closer together. The Baltic countries have large Russian-speaking populations, and our natural desire is to enable these people to lead peaceful, tranquil lives. Like our Baltic partners, we need the most fully developed ties in the economic, trade, transport, energy and other fields.

We have already stated that we guarantee the security of the Baltic countries. In furtherance of this initiative we propose that such guarantees should be given in the form of a unilateral undertaking by the Russian Federation, possibly confirmed in international law through the conclusion of an agreement on good-neighbourliness and mutual security guarantees between the Russian Federation and the individual Baltic countries or between the Russian Federation and all three Baltic countries.

We are prepared for the security guarantees to the Baltic countries to become multilateral through the accession to them, for example, of the United States of America, Germany, France and certain other western countries. Nor do we exclude the idea of establishing a regional zone of stability and security which includes the Nordic countries.

The relevant inter-State agreement, reinforced by a set of regional confidence-building measures in the economic, humanitarian and environmental fields, could become a kind of regional security and stability pact. In the very near future the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, on my instructions, will be submitting to our partners more detailed proposals in this respect.

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Fifty-second session
Agenda item 57
THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 3 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on the border incident that took place on 27 October 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 57, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dauid N. MWAKAWAGO
Ambassador

97-30136 (E) 051197

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ANNEX

Statement by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on the situation in Burundi and the incident of 27 October 1997

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania categorically refutes unfounded allegations levelled against it that Tanzanian forces attacked Burundi on the night of 27 October 1997, causing extensive damage to property and human lives. On the contrary, it was the Burundian army that attacked the Kiteule detachment of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces situated at Kagunga by light arms in the early morning of 27 October 1997. Being provoked, the Tanzanian forces had to exercise their right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has an obligation to protect its territorial integrity as well as the security of its citizens. In addition, the Government, being a signatory to the international conventions governing refugees, has an obligation to ensure their safety. The conditions generating the exodus of the people of Burundi to neighbouring countries are well known to the international community. In this connection, the internal conflict in Burundi should not be externalized in an attempt to hoodwink the world into believing that there is a conflict between the United Republic of Tanzania and Burundi. The United Republic of Tanzania will not be drawn into a purely internal conflict in Burundi, not even by recent acts of provocation by Burundian armed forces.

United Nations A/52/567

General Assembly

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Fifty-second session
Agenda item 112 (b)
Human rights questions: Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The present note is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/103 of 12 December 1996, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. In the resolution, the General Assembly requested Member States to notify the Secretary-General about the implications and negative effects of human rights and unilateral coercive measures on their populations in the various aspects referred to in the resolution. The Secretary-General has not yet received the information requested.

3. It may be recalled that the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions 1994/47, 1995/45, 1996/9 and 1997/7 on the same subject and that reports[1] were submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1994/47 and 1995/45.

4. In its resolution 1997/7, the Commission on Human Rights decided to examine the question further at its fifty-fourth session, which is to take place from 16 March to 24 April 1998.

Notes

[1] E/CN.4/1995/43 and E/CN.4/1996/45 and Add.1

97-30239 (E) 061197

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Fifty-second session
Agenda item 20 (b)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

International assistance to Rwanda for the reintegration of returning refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/30 H of 17 December 1996, on international assistance to Rwanda for the reintegration of returning refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development. In that resolution, the Assembly, welcoming the manner in which Rwanda had handled the massive and sudden repatriation of refugees from eastern Zaire[1] and Burundi, and stressing the need for the Government of Rwanda to continue its efforts to support the voluntary repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of returning refugees, requested all relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to provide all possible assistance and encouraged them to coordinate with the Government of Rwanda and the coordinator of United Nations activities in Rwanda in order to address the emergency and long-term development needs of Rwanda. The Assembly welcomed the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to cooperate with and to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian personnel.

2. The Assembly called upon the international community to continue its assistance, with a view to alleviating the intolerable conditions in Rwandan prisons and to expediting the processing of cases, and encouraged the Government of Rwanda to continue its efforts to improve the judicial system, including by expediting the trial process, and to continue to improve the situation in the prisons.

II. Significant developments from August 1996 to September 1997

A. Repatriation and refugees

3. Between November 1996 and September 1997, over 1,350,000 Rwandan refugees returned to their home country, largely owing to the increased political turmoil in the eastern region of the former Zaire and the dangers faced by refugees there. The return of refugees represented one of the largest single voluntary repatriation movements in African history. Over 850,000 refugees returned from the former Zaire and approximately 500,000 from the United Republic of Tanzania. Despite efforts to locate and repatriate the remaining Rwandan refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 200,000 refugees remain unaccounted for in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

4. The violence in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo also made it more difficult for United Nations agencies to operate in the field, severely restricting the movement of staff while isolating remaining refugees from aid agencies. Between May and September 1997, UNHCR repatriated 65,000 Rwandan refugees by air.

5. Since the repatriation started from the eastern region of the former Zaire in November 1996, UNHCR reports that 25,601 unaccompanied children have been repatriated, of whom 70 per cent were reunified with their families or relatives. Among the refugees returning from the United Republic of Tanzania were 2,218 separated children, of whom 53 per cent were reunited with their families or relatives.

6. During the mass repatriation, the number of deaths recorded was low, reflecting the relatively good health of the returnees. This contrasted markedly with the health of the refugees returning from January 1997 onwards to Cyangugu, Gisenyi and Kigali, after months of hiding in the forest. The last returnees repatriated from the Kisangani area were also suffering from severe health problems. There was an average of 2 to 3 deaths per day in all age groups owing mainly to malnutrition, anaemia and diarrhoea.

7. When being repatriated by air, those medically at risk were identified at the arrival airports by UNHCR operational partners and further medical screening and referrals were carried out at transit centres. The sick were escorted either directly to the local hospitals or to medical facilities. Those suffering from moderate malnutrition (70 to 80 per cent of weight for height) were escorted home and encouraged to visit the nearest malnutrition centre in their commune. Those with severe malnutrition remained at the centre.

8. A Joint Reintegration Programming Unit has been established by UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In accordance with an agreement signed in March 1997, UNHCR and UNDP will assist the country with reintegration efforts through the transitional phase that links relief and return of refugees to development.

B. Justice

9. The international community continued to provide substantial support to the establishment of a functioning system of justice in Rwanda and noted an improvement in the conduct of the genocide trials during June and July 1997. After the institution of the confession-and-guilty-plea procedure, an increased number of confessions have been offered and accepted, totalling 19 during June and July.

compared to one during the first four months of the trials in December 1996. During the same two-month period, the number of prosecution witnesses appearing in court increased twofold. Most of the accused have been provided with lawyers by the non-governmental organization *Avocats sans frontières*.

10. Thus far, 118 judgements have been handed down in 31 trials, with 53 of the accused being convicted as category one offenders (responsible for planning and directing the genocide) and sentenced to death. Another 34 defendants were convicted as category two offenders (participated in the genocide), including 32 who were sentenced to life imprisonment and two who were sentenced to 20 years in prison. Twenty-one defendants were given varying sentences of less than 20 years. Eight defendants were acquitted.

11. As at mid-June 1997, the number of persons in detention was estimated at 110,000 (1.4 per cent of the overall population). Overcrowding in many of the communal lock-ups (*cachots*) continues to be a problem, although the transfer of prisoners from the *cachots* to central prisons has increased. The feeding of prisoners in *cachots* remains a major problem. Given the few programmes in existence for feeding detainees in *cachots*, prisoners must be fed by relatives, some of whom are required to walk long distances each day and wait for hours outside the *cachots* for brief exchanges of food and empty containers with their detained family members. This exacerbates an already fragile food security situation in the homes of families of detainees, since those bringing the food are no longer able to till their fields or seek other means of earning an income.

12. Another pressing problem is the detention of minors. Currently in detention are 2,150 boys and male adolescents and 80 girls and female adolescents, presumed to have been between 14 and 18 years of age at the time of their alleged crimes, and 150 boys and 5 girls presumed to have been under the age of 14 years at the time of their alleged crimes. To work exclusively on cases of children and adolescents, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) funds a task force of 40 police personnel, with priority given to the identification of non-responsible children and their transfer to a re-education centre at Gitagata. The first trial for a criminally responsible minor accused of genocide-related crimes was held on 24 September 1997. In addition to minors and adolescents in detention, there are 600 infants accompanying their accused mothers in prisons. For these individuals, the non-governmental organization Save the Children Fund-United States of America is training the Rwandan staff of non-governmental organizations to provide psycho-social services similar to those that they are already providing to women and children in seven other prison facilities.

13. Two three-day seminars were held in each prefecture of the country, organized by the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, the United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda and UNHCR. Beneficiaries include more than 5,000 persons directly or indirectly involved in judicial matters. A seminar on procedures for and follow-up to violations of human rights was funded by UNHCR and organized jointly with the Gendarmerie national. A four-month intensive training for the Inspecteurs de Police judiciaire has also been conducted, and a number of judiciary buildings have been rehabilitated, constructed and equipped to assist with the effective functioning of the country's judicial system. Administrative support in the form of copies of legal documents and office supplies is one of the basic needs that has not been fully met. While training and seminars for judiciary staff continue to be offered, there is an additional need for refresher courses and advanced training.

14. Human rights promotion and education is jointly carried out by the Human Rights Field Operation and Rwandan partners, including communal and national authorities and non-governmental human rights organizations. These programmes continue to target the general population, as well as particular groups, including civil servants, the military, women, youth representatives, teachers and students, increasing awareness of and encouraging commitment to basic human rights principles.

15. Human rights mobile theatre troupes are another medium used to disseminate human rights messages on peace, tolerance and co-existence in Rwandan society. Three troupes (Inganzo, Rafiki and Inganji) are presently performing in Byumba, Gikongoro, Gitarama, Kibungo and Kigali Ville prefectures.

16. Monitoring activities in some parts of the country have been hampered by a lack of adequate security. Soldiers of the former Rwandese Armed Forces, members of the *interahamwe* militia and other extremist elements continue to spread fear in the western provinces of Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Kibuye, Cyangugu and Gikongoro and prevent the Government of Rwanda from establishing complete control in all its territories. Counter-insurgency operations by the military have led to violent clashes in which civilians are often victims.

III. Rehabilitation, reconstruction and socio-economic development

17. The Government is embarking upon an extensive rehabilitation agenda and believes that reintegration and reconstruction programmes are more relevant to the needs of Rwanda than relief assistance programmes. Reintegration and the provision of adequate housing remain major priorities for the aid community, in addition to ensuring that humanitarian needs are met.

18. Some controversy has surrounded the *umugudugu* policy of the Government whereby it regroups people into villages, and the results of the implementation of the policy have been mixed. There have been successful sensitization campaigns in parts of the country (in Kibungo prefecture in particular) where government authorities, UNHCR and participating non-governmental organizations have worked closely with the returnees to start new lives in grouped housing settings. In some areas, flexibility on the part of local authorities has allowed the inhabitants of communes to rehabilitate their homes and keep them in their original locations.

19. Confusion among peasants, however, remained widespread as contradictory decisions were adopted by some local authorities. Not all local authorities were equally committed and equipped to help returnees to recover their properties. Although it is not possible to obtain reliable figures, many of those who have returned since November 1996 have not recovered their properties.

20. Most difficulties in the allocation of shelter and land arise in areas where large numbers of old-caseload refugees have settled. When the new-caseload returnees arrive at their homes of origin, they are entitled by government decree to recover their properties within a reasonable amount of time. In some instances, the two groups of returnees actually share accommodation and agricultural land but to avoid further conflict there is still a need to identify and provide an alternative for the latter. Where numbers of old-caseload returnees are minimal, the settlement and the preparation of housing has been less problematic and has facilitated the application of government policy. In some communes the availability of land is a problem, whereas in others the problem is access to potable water.

A. Agriculture, food production and food security

21. Although the improvement of food security and the redefinition of agricultural strategy are priorities of the Rwandan Government, returnees were only able to partially participate in agricultural production in the current season, leading to an increased fragility in the food security situation. The Government now estimates that some 2.1 million of a current population estimated at 7.4 million, that is, 30 per cent of Rwanda's population, are especially vulnerable or in need of food assistance.

22. In recent years, agricultural production has steadily increased from a low in 1994, where it represented 61 per cent of the 1990 production, to a high in 1996 where it was at 77 per cent of 1990 levels. Despite problems surrounding a lack of sufficient agricultural input, the generally good rainy season has had a positive impact, indicated in preliminary reports following an evaluation of the current season's yield in June. For the current season, an estimated 265,000 vulnerable and recent returnee households benefited from the distribution of agricultural input (3,200 tons of seeds and 530,000 hoes), enabling them to participate in production activities.

23. According to the most recent joint crop assessment mission conducted by the Government of Rwanda, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in June 1997, food production in the second agricultural season in 1997 increased by about 7 per cent over that of the same season in 1996, mainly owing to an increase in the areas cultivated. The localized drought of January-February 1997 and the heavy rains of March-April 1997 have, however, negatively affected the yield in those areas. The return of over 1.35 million refugees since November 1996 has significantly decreased the per capita food availability. As a result, Rwanda will continue to depend on targeted food aid and food-for-work programmes during the forthcoming six months.

24. Studies conducted by the United States Agency for International Development, FAO, WFP and Save the Children Fund-United Kingdom point to significant food shortages, and the preliminary results from the crop assessment report of FAO, WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture, although indicating a 7 per cent increase in production from the mid-year harvest in 1996, emphasize that the massive return of refugees leaves particular areas prone to food shortages. The prefectures of Butare, Gikongoro and Kibuye have experienced the largest

shortfall, meeting only 75 per cent of their food requirements. A study by Save the Children Fund-United Kingdom in Butane and Gikongoro shows that former refugees who returned to these areas prior to March 1997 will experience a shortfall in their income needs of between 30 and 40 per cent.

25. The food security and agricultural strategy for the country is being finalized with the assistance of FAO and UNDP. In this framework, the priority issues of land tenure and occupation have particular importance. The aim is to increase agricultural production in the coming seasons and to scale down free food distributions. The focus is not only on emergency assistance but also on providing support to mid-term and long-term policies that will allow the creation of conditions for sustainable agricultural production, increase production capacity, upgrade storage, transport and marketing and support diversification from subsistence agriculture by providing alternative opportunities for earning a living, particularly at the rural level.

26. Various programmes, including-food-for work, are being aimed at the reclamation of land, support for diversification and micro-enterprise, rehabilitation of production capacities and improvement of transport networks. The slow rehabilitation of livestock, especially in the small animal sector, has further aggravated the food security of the rural population and has had negative ramifications on soil fertility and thus agricultural production capacity.

27. By the end of July 1997, WFP had dispatched six months of food assistance to 1.3 million returnees settled in 153 communes, thus ending its overall commitment to free food distributions. From November 1996 to end-June 1997, WFP delivered and assisted in the distribution of 104,249 metric tonnes of food, the equivalent of 7.8 million full monthly rations. Twenty-five per cent of this food went to the continued rehabilitation of Rwanda through food-for-work programmes and through assistance to the poorest members of society via nutritional centres, with an overall beneficiary population of 300,000 each month. In order to build local administrative capacity, food is now being distributed at the communal level by local authorities with support, training and monitoring provided by WFP. The monitoring of distributions has, however, been more difficult in 1997 owing to the prevailing security situation in the western part of the country.

28. According to WFP, the food pipeline situation is adequate in terms of committed stocks up to August/September 1997. Owing, however, to the logistical constraints of getting food into the country, and the distribution constraints existing within Rwanda as a result of security problems, the volume of distribution has been lower than the optimal target since January 1997. The security situation, particularly in those areas of western Rwanda that have received large numbers of refugees, has hampered distribution. On average, WFP has managed to distribute around 15,000 tons per month of a target of 18,000 tons.

B. Reintegration

29. The return of refugees created serious difficulties for the Rwandan economy and society as a whole with respect to their reinstallation and reintegration. Taking into account an economic situation seriously weakened by the events of 1994, the smooth reintegration of all citizens is a complex task that must be accomplished without delay. In order to focus on the needs of both returnees and the communities to which they have returned, the Government has identified the areas and sectors for which reintegration and reinstallation assistance is most urgent.

30. Although the macroeconomic situation is presently improving with a recovery of gross domestic product (GDP) and falling inflation, Rwanda still faces deep-seated economic problems, with GDP at 65 per cent of 1990 levels and a budget deficit of 14 per cent of GDP. With the worst of the emergency having passed, it is imperative to provide a firm foundation for settlement strategies. At the same time, improved land use and the integration of infrastructural development and economic regeneration should be encouraged by the elaboration of development plans at the communal and prefectural levels, based on needs assessments carried out in the communes. Such development plans will serve as a tool to assist local authorities in clearly establishing their priorities and in the coordination of activities of the organizations working in the prefecture.

C. Water and sanitation

31. In 1996, the water supply coverage for the rural population was estimated at 70 per cent: 24 per cent by adduction and 46 per cent by protected wells. Yet few communes have sufficient access to clean water for all inhabitants, despite the existence of scores of rivers and lakes in the country. Existing systems are being rehabilitated and pipelines extended, but the fact remains that 30 per cent of the rural population is spending too much of its productive time travelling too far for water or is dependent on unclean

water sources for its daily needs. With a rural population of 6.4 million, that translates to nearly 2 million Rwandans without clean water. Among the urban population, 90 per cent have access to water through public taps or private connections.

32. The reliance on traditional sanitation facilities in rural areas and limited access to more modern ones reflects unsatisfactory conditions for segments of the population. Expanded health education is therefore in order to make these segments aware of unsanitary conditions and encourage better hygiene practices.

D. Education

33. The educational situation has deteriorated sharply as a direct consequence of the trauma and devastation associated with the civil war in 1994. In 1996, Rwanda had 1,880 primary schools with 1,017,468 primary school students, of whom 49.8 per cent were girls. In 1996, there were 17,180 primary schoolteachers, of whom 49 per cent were qualified.

34. The current secondary school enrolment of 90,851 students (48.5 per cent female) is 38 per cent lower than pre-war levels and, although enrolment in higher education in 1995 equalled that of previous years, of the 3,391 candidates for the scholastic year 1996-1997, only 600 were accorded places because of a lack of accommodation.

35. The informal education system was hit particularly hard by the war, with 1,548 of 1,943 operational literacy centres being totally destroyed, while another 364 were partially damaged. With an illiteracy rate estimated at 60 per cent in 1996 and a survey showing that 57.2 per cent of illiterate persons are women, the demand for assistance to this sector is even greater.

36. With the recent return of refugees, the Ministry of Education estimates that an additional 200,000 students and 4,500 teachers must be integrated within the school system in 1997.

37. The construction and rehabilitation of primary, secondary and technical schools throughout the country is not uniformly undertaken and school materials and equipment are more often than not seriously lacking. School fees, however minimal, cannot be met by many of the children among the returnees.

38. With the evident need for tradesmen and technical people, such as carpenters, masons, plumbers, land surveyors and other skilled labourers, a number of non-governmental organizations and UNHCR are assisting with the rehabilitation of vocational and technical training centres. The skills of young returnees and women are also being improved through vocational training initiatives.

39. Some social assistance programmes are working fairly well, among them a mechanism for the identification of orphaned children by communal and sectoral committees and their subsequent exemption from paying primary school fees. How long this can continue given the over-extension of local capacities remains to be seen. Flexibility in the application of restrictions and requirements has enabled other underprivileged children to receive an education, as rules dictating the obligatory wearing of uniforms in many cases have been provisionally relaxed.

40. Despite the efforts to make education available to the poor, rural Rwanda does not have a universal understanding of the importance of education and, as a consequence, significant percentages of school-aged children (38 per cent gross rate) do not attend school. One reason is the widespread poverty which means many families must focus their attention on activities that yield immediate results and put food on their tables. There is a need for sensitization campaigns to encourage parents to send their children to school.

E. Women and children

41. Women and children often face special problems. As at January 1997, 2,641 children were detained, the vast majority for allegedly having participated in the genocide. Only one child has been tried. Children placed with foster families are sometimes confronted with abuse; others are victims of violence based on ethnicity. Women continue to face legal discrimination since there is inequity in the labour and inheritance laws, as well as in customary law.

42. Malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases are the main causes of child mortality and only 44 per cent of all households are within 5 kilometres of a health facility. Teenage pregnancy, especially among the returnees, has increased dramatically. There is also a reported increase in hospitalization for complications arising from unsafe abortions, especially in young women in urban areas.

43. Analysis of underlying causes of diseases indicates a low utilization of health services in rural areas and a shortage of qualified personnel and equipment. In 1996, the percentage of underweight children under five years of age was found to be 27.3 per cent, with 10.7 per cent severely underweight. Of the children less than five years of age

assessed, 41.8 per cent were stunted, 20.6 per cent of them severely so. With an estimated 200,000 children already living with foster families in Rwanda, the arrival of 6,160 more unaccompanied minors on flights from various points in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo raised the humanitarian community's concerns. Since in the latter stages of the operation many have been arriving with other returnees, rather than exclusively in unaccompanied children's groups, UNHCR operational partners, Médicins sans frontières and Concern Worldwide, meet the children at the airport and transport them to transit centres where separate facilities are available for them.

44. Departures from the transit centres to their communes of origin are slower for children owing to tracing requirements which are undertaken by Save the Children Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations. Nevertheless, generally within a few days of arrival, children are transported to their prefectures of origin where centres have been established to receive them. Follow-up after reunification has been hampered in some prefectures owing to the prevailing security situation. By mid-June 1997, the reunification rate had reached an all-time high, with 88 per cent of arriving unaccompanied minors being reunited with family members within days of their arrival at the prefecture. Nonetheless, between 900 and 1,000 very young children who are unable to give their location of origin remain at the centres.

F. Health and nutrition

45. Although 50 per cent of the health sector's infrastructure has been rehabilitated and 40 per cent of its centres and hospitals have been re-equipped, insufficient numbers of adequately trained staff, the persistent lack of materials and equipment in the remaining 60 per cent of the country's health establishments, and means of communication between health centres and referral hospitals, remain major concerns. There is a high prevalence of malaria, diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases, protein-energy malnutrition and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) that requires improvements in diagnostic and treatment capacities, for both outpatients and inpatients. A step forward in improving health services has been the creation of committees at the sectoral and communal levels that have been modestly successful in the promotion of the Bamako Initiative in much of the country.

46. The nutritional situation in 1996 indicated serious problems, in particular among children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The situation has deteriorated further with the arrival of additional vulnerable populations.

47. In response to the situation, during the first half of 1997, WFP, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and partner agencies, delivered 4,000 metric tonnes of mixed food commodities (a total of 400,000 monthly rations) primarily for use in nutritional centres and for inpatient feeding reaching as many as 60,000 to 70,000 people, primarily women, children and AIDS patients, each month. In the light of the continued high prevalence of protein-energy malnutrition, UNICEF and WFP plan to enhance the protein content of monthly rations through the inclusion of UNIMIX and high protein biscuits, thus increasing supplementary feeding rations to 77 per cent of the daily needs of the beneficiary.

G. Shelter

48. The Government of Rwanda has identified the provision of shelter as one of its top priorities. By the end of 1996, the Government estimated that there was an immediate need for 253,000 new houses and the rehabilitation of an additional 147,000 houses. As a vivid example of the continued need for shelter assistance, a survey conducted in Kibungo prefecture in June 1997 found 21,962 families still living under plastic sheeting. In response, local and international implementing partners of UNHCR are helping to increase the available housing in Rwanda by providing returnees who are settling on newly designated land with housing construction materials and construction assistance.

49. Shelter construction at the 96 official designated government settlement sites and dispersed locations has intensified since the beginning of 1997. In 1996 and 1997, United Nations agencies supported the construction of almost 50,000 houses. An estimated 30 per cent of the known new shelter requirements have been met.

50. The progress of organized construction activities has been hampered by the time required to identify the beneficiaries, the selection and demarcation of settlement sites, the recruitment of skilled labour, the lack of participation by beneficiaries, and the slow distribution of agricultural plots to beneficiaries. Infrastructural work at settlement sites has also not been completed quickly enough to meet the expectations of the beneficiaries, resulting in lower occupancy rates than desired. The acute shortage of skilled labour in the country has also slowed the pace of infrastructural construction activities.

IV. Constraints on the delivery of humanitarian assistance

51. The principal constraint on the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been the insecurity which has been particularly difficult in the north and north-west, especially in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri prefectures. Travel by humanitarian workers has frequently been prohibited. This has resulted in reduced access and a less than regular delivery of much-needed aid to the vulnerable groups in those areas. The murder of five staff members of the Human Rights Field Operation, two WFP staff members and one UNHCR staff member has clearly impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Without the constant and secure presence of aid workers, it has been difficult to ascertain the exact humanitarian needs of the population and to deliver essential relief items. The Government has endeavoured to help through the provision of military escorts which are obligatory for missions sent by humanitarian organizations to the more insecure prefectures in the country.

V. Non-governmental organizations

52. Nearly all activities supported by funds made available to United Nations agencies in Rwanda are implemented by either government ministries or non-governmental organizations which are present throughout Rwanda. Cooperation between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations is good, which has led to the more effective implementation of relief programmes. Since the United Nations and non-governmental organizations are partners with the Government in the implementation of relief and development programmes, continuous efforts need to be made to link more closely the objectives and interventions of all concerned parties.

VI. Assistance by Member States and other donors

53. In 1996, Rwanda's emergency relief requirements were covered by the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for the Great Lakes region. The appeal has been the most significant fund-raising instrument for humanitarian relief programmes of the United Nations agencies, as well as for some non-governmental organizations. In 1997, the Government of Rwanda indicated that it did not wish to be included in the 1997 appeal for the Great Lakes region since its needs, while significant, related more to reintegration and developmental programmes.

54. Despite the non-participation of Rwanda in the 1997 consolidated appeal for the Great Lakes region, Rwanda has received considerable support from donor countries for humanitarian aid programmes. It totals some US$ 99 million, with the European Community Humanitarian Office and the United States of America being the largest two contributors (US$ 30 million and US$ 19 million, respectively). Other major donors included Norway, Germany, Canada, Sweden and Australia. On 2 June 1997, Member States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were invited to provide information on assistance extended to Rwanda in the framework of General Assembly resolution 51/30 H. Responses received are as follows:

(a) Austria contributed SwF 100,000 in humanitarian aid, US$ 90,400 for refugee rehabilitation and post-conflict reconstruction, and S 500,000 in grants;

(b) China contributed 162 tons of rice, two sewing workshops and 38 sewing machines and a grant for the building of hospitals and schools;

(c) Egypt provided US$ 300,000 in the form of medicine, food, tents, blankets, medical equipment and other support;

(d) In 1996 and 1997, Ireland provided £Ir 4,107,270 for the reintegration of returning refugees, the restoration of total peace and reconstruction and socio-economic development;

(e) Italy donated Lit 800 million to the World Health Organization for health and social assistance to women victims of the war; Lit 1 billion to UNICEF for assistance to street children; Lit 500 million to the International Organization for Migration to assist the repatriation of refugees; Lit 1 billion to UNICEF to assist in the rehabilitation of women and children victims of the crisis in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lit 3 billion to WFP for a food aid programme; Lit 5.2 billion for three direct management programmes of social, health and food assistance to refugees; and Lit 1 billion to UNDP for a health project in the Mutara region;

(f) Luxembourg contributed a total of LuxF 12.5 million for humanitarian assistance programmes undertaken by UNHCR, Caritas and ICRC;

(g) During the period June 1995-June 1997, Sweden provided assistance to Rwanda, *inter alia*, for the reconstruction of houses, the support and rehabilitation of children, the repatriation of refugees, health care, the justice system and human rights. The assistance provided during the

period amount to SKr 119,000,000. The main implementing partners have been UNHCR, WFP, the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and ICRC. In addition, Sweden's contribution to the refugee programme in the Great Lakes region amounted to SKr 244,000,000;

(h) Over £13,206,000 was provided by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as bilateral aid in 1996, and £27,230,000 was the country's share of European Union assistance to Rwanda. Amongst the various types of programmes funded by these contributions were those concerning food, water and sanitation, social services, health services, logistical support, humanitarian coordination and rehabilitation activities.

VII. Concluding observations

55. Significant progress was made in the provision of humanitarian assistance in Rwanda in 1996 and 1997 despite the enormous humanitarian needs confronting the Government of Rwanda and the humanitarian community during that period. The difficulties associated with the return and reintegration of 1.35 million refugees, compounded by persistent and severe security problems, challenged the Government and humanitarian organizations alike.

56. Insecurity in the northern and western regions of Rwanda, where numerous vulnerable populations are located, reduced the access of humanitarian workers to the areas, with accompanying reductions in the reach and scope of humanitarian programmes. Particularly reprehensible was the violence directed at innocent civilians and the deliberate targeting and murder of humanitarian and human rights staff, which further inhibited assistance efforts.

57. It is clear that Rwanda's greatest challenge is coping with the legacy of the genocide. A promising start has been made on reintegration programmes but substantial additional resources and, more importantly, a cessation of violence and sustained reconciliation initiatives are required for reintegration to succeed. An immediate priority is the justice sector, where tens of thousands languish in prisons and *cachots* awaiting improvements in the capacity of the justice system to handle their cases.

58. While the emphasis is clearly on rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, significant humanitarian assistance needs remain to be met. The response of the international community to humanitarian requirements in Rwanda has been admirable but much remains to be done. Continued support of these programmes is necessary in order to ensure at least minimal assistance to the populations most in need.

Notes

[1] Zaire changed its name to "Democratic Republic of the Congo", effective 17 May 1997.

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QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 4 November 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention recent highly provocative and aggressive actions of Turkey, which have caused serious concern and escalate tension in Cyprus. During the period from 20 to 26 October 1997 Turkey substantially reinforced the armaments of its armed military forces in the area of the Republic of Cyprus under its illegal occupation. Also Turkish warships on 2 November 1997 have entered and docked at the closed ports of Famagusta and Kyrenia in the occupied area and there have been numerous violations of the airspace of the Republic by Turkish military aircraft.

More specifically, on 23 October two military transport ships, a Bayractar (NL-120) and a Sancaktar (NL-121), at 0945 hours and 1630 respectively, docked at the occupied port of Famagusta, unloading 17 M48A5T2 tanks, 8 automated firearms 155 klm type M-52TS and a number of military vehicles. On 25 October at 1010 hours, a Bayractar (NL-120) transport ship docked at the occupied port, unloading 17 M48AT2 tanks.

A further indication of the heightening of tensions by Turkey in Cyprus is the fact that, as part of the current Turkish military exercises, on 2 November nine Turkish military warships, which include frigates, submarines, tankers and torpedo-boats, entered and are now docked at the occupied ports of Kyrenia and Famagusta.

I would also like to draw attention to the alarmingly increasing number of violations of the airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region of Nicosia by Turkish military aircraft, which continue unabated as indicated below:

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On 1 November, 2 Turkish military planes and 11 helicopters violated the national airspace of the Republic by flying over the areas of Kyrenia.

On 2 November, one helicopter and eight Turkish military planes violated the national airspace of the Republic, of which two F-16s flew over the Kyrenia areas, and two F-16s flew over the area from Morphou Bay to Famagusta.

I would like to point out that these new Turkish illegal actions increase further the already excessive armaments in the occupied area, which has been characterized in your reports to the Security Council on the situation in Cyprus as one of the most densely militarized areas of the world.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest once again these new provocative actions which are in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, and in complete disregard of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question of Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) J. C. DROUSHIOTIS
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Cyprus
to the United Nations

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda items 37 and 81
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 5 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the proposals on the Middle East, "A code of peace and security in the Middle East", put forward by E. M. Primakov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in Cairo on 31 October 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 37 and 81, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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ANNEX

A code of peace and security in the Middle East

Proposals by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation put forward in Cairo on 31 October 1997

In the opinion of the Russian co-sponsor, the adoption of a code of conduct in the area of security for the Middle East could substantially facilitate progress towards a just and comprehensive settlement. The code might include the following elements:

(1) Without a peaceful settlement in all the areas of negotiation in the Middle East peace process, the stable and lasting security of each of the States in the region cannot be guaranteed;

(2) No State in the region can achieve national security solely by means of military hardware;

(3) Security for some cannot be based on impairing the security of others, including in the settlement of territorial disputes;

(4) Given the direct or indirect involvement of the countries of the region, viewed in broad terms, in the Middle East conflict, the security of the parties to the conflict cannot be viewed in isolation: the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey, northern Africa and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, including Iraq, must be involved in a "Middle East zone of peace";

(5) The security of the countries in the Middle East cannot be based on opposed strategic unions or groupings with support from external forces or structures;

(6) International law is the basis for security and stability: commitment and continuity with respect to bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements is vital for a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict;

(7) There must be decisive action against all forms and varieties of terrorism and extremism, whatever the reasons, including religious reasons, that may motivate them: the peace must not be held hostage by terrorists;

(8) The countries of the region must renounce weapons of mass destruction so that it becomes a zone free of weapons of mass destruction;

(9) A reciprocal reduction is required in the military budgets of the regional States, with the resources being reallocated for development, including multilateral regional economic cooperation: peace with one's neighbours is cheaper and more advantageous than maintaining a first-class army;

(10) There must be unconditional mutual respect for the unique cultural and religious heritage of each people - freedom of religion for all faiths and

unimpeded access for believers to the holy places in Jerusalem and other parts of the region;

(11) There must be a just settlement of the region's humanitarian problems, including a settlement of the refugee problem that is acceptable to all parties;

(12) Regional economic cooperation must be developed and an integrated economic system for the Middle East must be established.

E. M. PRIMAKOV

UNITED NATIONS

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Agenda item 36

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 5 November 1997 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that, by a note verbale dated 10 October 1997 addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Permanent Mission of South Africa requested that it be considered a member of the Committee, to which it had already been granted observer status.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at its 232nd meeting, on 5 November 1997, welcomed this decision by South Africa and approved its request, which reflects the growing international support for the Committee's efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

In the light of the above, and since the membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been established by the General Assembly, I have the honour to request you to bring the matter to the attention of the Assembly for its approval.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène KA
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Letter dated 4 November 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Japan and Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Bangkok Statement: Furthering Asia-Africa Cooperation, of the Second Asia-Africa Forum, which was held in Bangkok from 11 to 13 June 1997 (see annex). The Forum was jointly organized by the Governments of Japan and Thailand, the United Nations (the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the United Nations Development Programme) and the Global Coalition for Africa.

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 99 (b).

(Signed) Hisashi OWADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Japan
to the United Nations

(Signed) Asda JAYANAMA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations

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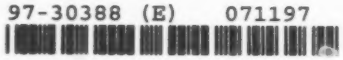

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Bangkok Statement: Furthering Asia-Africa Cooperation of the Second Asia-Africa Forum held in Bangkok from 11-13 June 1997

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 1993 Tokyo International Conference on African Development emphasized the importance of Asian experience for African development. Following that Conference, the First Asia-Africa Forum, held in December 1994 in Bandung, Indonesia, adopted a framework for Asia-Africa cooperation. The Second Asia-Africa Forum, held in Bangkok from 11 to 13 June 1997, was attended by senior officials from 44 African countries, 11 Asian countries, 12 donor countries, 10 international organizations and 4 research institutes. The Forum reviewed the progress made in implementing the Tokyo Declaration and the Bandung Framework, and explored ways and means of furthering cooperation between Asia and Africa. The Forum was also part of the preparatory process for the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held in 1998. The discussions at the Bangkok Forum focused on the specific areas of capacity-building, sustainable agricultural development and food security and private sector development.

II. CURRENT STATE OF ASIA-AFRICA COOPERATION

2. The Forum reviewed the significant advances made in cooperation between Asia and Africa since the Bandung conference and noted the growing number of bilateral agreements in such sectors as infrastructure, food and agriculture, natural resources exploration and human resources development. It also noted that, in addition to Japan, other Asian countries were emerging as development partners. It was hoped that additional resources could be made available for cooperation between Asia and Africa.

3. It was recognized that trade and investment flows between Asia and Africa, though still relatively low, had been rising steadily in recent years to the point where South-East Asia had become a significant source of foreign direct investment in Africa. Participants were also encouraged by instances of triangular cooperation involving donor and developing countries and observed that such cooperation could be expanded to involve more Asian and African countries.

4. The Forum observed, however, that since development was more a matter of choice than of chance, deepening and broadening cooperation between Asia and Africa required effective political commitment on both sides. While recognizing the significant economic reforms that had been undertaken in many African countries to date, the Forum urged them to intensify the pace of structural transformation of their economies. Among other things, that would provide

improved opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships with Asian countries.

III. ELEMENTS FOR FURTHERING COOPERATION BETWEEN ASIA AND AFRICA

5. The Forum underlined the need for African countries to anchor their development process in their traditions, value systems and cultures. African countries could draw lessons from Asian countries on how to ensure that their development programmes reflected their own priorities. That, together with increased transparency, accountability and good governance, would lay the foundation for long-term sustainable development.

6. Participants recognized the potential for expanding trade and investment between Asia and Africa to levels comparable with those between Asia and other regions as the environment in African countries became more conducive. They also noted the possibilities for broadening triangular cooperation to include private sector, academic and research institutions and non-governmental organizations.

7. While there had been some progress in networking, as recommended in the Bandung Framework, the Forum recognized that more needed to be done in that area. Moreover, the need to establish information dissemination systems that would enable Asian and African countries to expand opportunities for cooperation in various areas and among all partners was emphasized. Areas of cooperation should be clearly defined, with concrete and measurable outcomes.

8. The Forum noted some tangible progress in bringing about good governance and sustainable development. At the same time it acknowledged that human and institutional capacities remained limited in a majority of African countries. They should continue to enhance those capacities, making optimum use of the resources, expertise and skills available to them.

9. The Forum noted the efforts made by African countries to develop an enabling environment for capacity-building, including human, institutional, political and economic aspects. However, it also emphasized the urgent need for African countries to strengthen further their national, subregional and regional capacities to promote the process of integration and to face effectively the challenges of globalization. In order to promote social and economic development, alleviate poverty and support a more competitive private sector, the Forum stressed the importance of strengthening the capacity of public sector institutions.

10. The Forum emphasized the need for African countries, in the context of budgetary allocation and public sector investment, to accord priority to education, training, women's empowerment and youth development. It also urged African countries to adopt measures aimed at reversing the brain drain and to retain and maintain national competencies.

11. Given the rapid pace of economic liberalization and globalization, it was suggested that the competitiveness of African countries could be further

enhanced through networking with counterpart institutions and centres of excellence in the Asian region. The Forum noted the usefulness of existing frameworks for bilateral, regional and interregional cooperation, including technical and economic cooperation among developing countries. It also called for increased support for triangular cooperation, and called upon donor countries to provide additional resources. A new development strategy based on a global partnership could also serve as a viable policy framework for advancing South-South cooperation. The Forum emphasized the need to include non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and voluntary agencies, as well as women and youth.

12. The Forum noted that, although African countries continued to rely heavily on agriculture, including animal husbandry and fishery, for both income and employment, the sector was not as productive, efficient or diversified as its potential suggested. The main constraints to increasing agricultural production and raising productivity included the low priority accorded to the sector, poor physical infrastructure, limited utilization of advanced technologies, inadequate access to credit and appropriate technologies for small-scale farmers and the weak linkages between research institutions and farmers. The Forum urged that African countries give higher priority to agriculture and, in particular, to the need for diversification of production in the sector. It was also emphasized that special attention should be paid to the role and needs of women in agriculture.

13. The Forum noted that great scope existed for cooperation between Asia and Africa in agriculture and food security. The areas outlined below were viewed as being of particular importance:

(a) Agricultural research institutes should formulate joint projects with donors, national experts and non-governmental organizations to address problems across all the agro-ecosystems. National, subregional and interregional networking among research institutes should be strengthened in order to facilitate the generation, adaptation, evaluation and dissemination of agriculture-related knowledge and technologies. Asian countries should facilitate the transfer of those technologies, including biotechnologies;

(b) Water resource management programmes should be developed, focusing in particular on establishing irrigation schemes and developing underground water resources. Special attention should also be paid to drought-resistant crops and farming systems that can cope with irregular rainfall. The experiences of Asian countries in those areas should be utilized through technical cooperation projects, including triangular cooperation modalities;

(c) Asian countries should encourage investment in the agricultural sector of African countries. African countries may need to review their land-use policies and legislation, in particular as they relate to land tenure systems.

14. The Forum emphasized the crucial role of the private sector for sustained economic growth in African countries. While it was understood that there was no single Asian model that could be replicated exactly, it was no[t] that successful economies in Asia and Africa had implemented policie[s] and strategies conducive to private sector development.

15. The Forum recognized that there were numerous opportunities for public and private sector cooperation between Asia and Africa in promoting the private sector in African countries. Among them were the development of physical infrastructure and communications, expansion and deepening of the financial sector, managerial, vocational and skills training, promotion of foreign investment and development of joint ventures.

16. The Forum proposed that specific modalities for furthering such cooperation could include bilateral visits between African and Asian countries; development of linkages among private sector groups and associations, networking and sharing of information through exchanges of visits and other mechanisms and utilization of Asian professionals able to undertake short-term assignments in African countries.

IV. CONCLUSION

17. The Forum reiterated its strong support for the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the preparatory process currently under way. The results achieved in the Forum also serve as inputs into the Conference.

18. The Forum agreed that a third Asia-Africa Forum should be held devoted to assessing the progress of cooperation between Asia and Africa in the light of the outcome of the Conference. It expressed the firm belief that such cooperation would, in the foreseeable future, represent a major component of the new emerging global partnership.

19. Finally, the Forum expressed its gratitude to the Government and people of Thailand for the warm and generous hospitality extended to the participants and the excellent facilities provided, which created a conducive atmosphere for a productive exchange of views.